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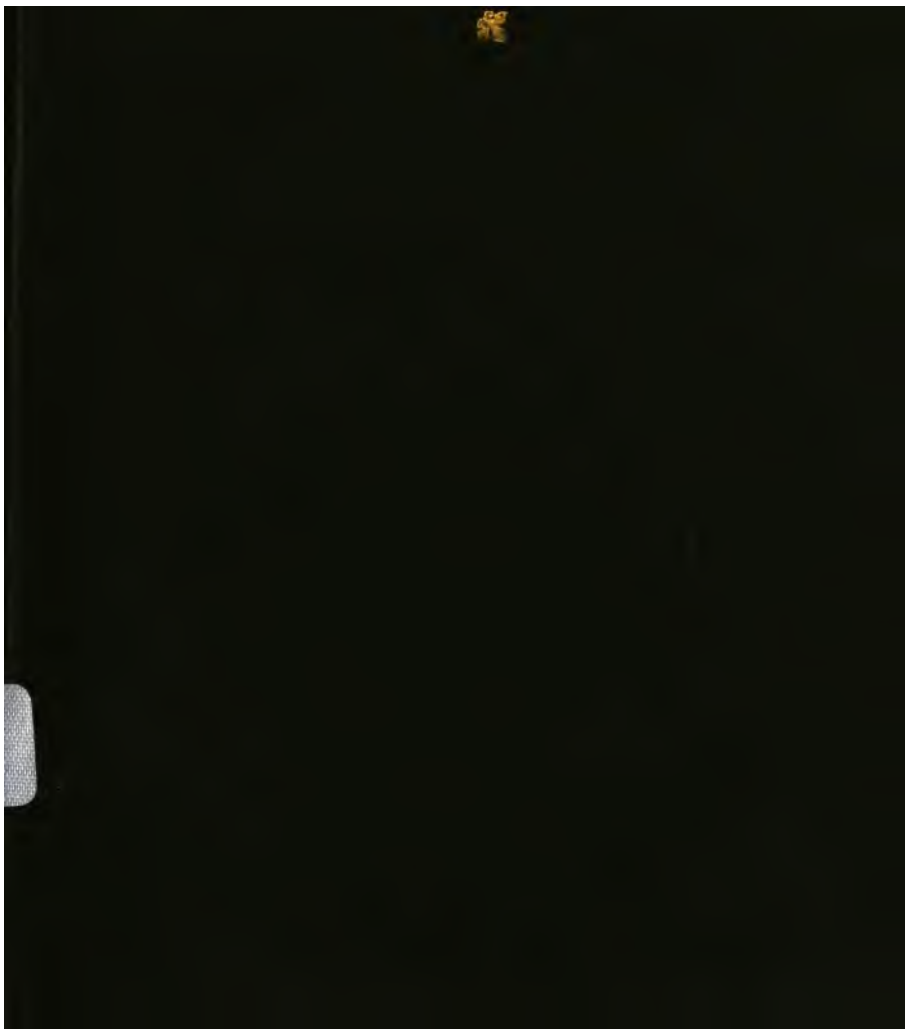
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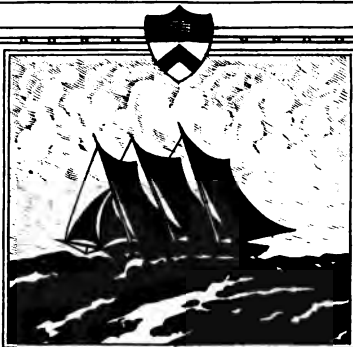
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GRAYLING AND HOW TO CATCH THEM,
AND
RECOLLECTIONS OF A SPORTSMAN.



GRAYLING AND HOW TO CATCH THEM

AND

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SPORTSMAN

BY

FRANCIS M. WALBRAN

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TO
MAJOR ANTHONY CARLISLE
("SOUTH WEST" OF THE "FIELD"),
THIS BOOK
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY HAPPY HOURS
SPENT IN HIS COMPANY.

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PREFACE.

JOHN JACKSON, of Tanfield Mill, was, I believe, the first to devote special attention to the capture of the grayling; and on the title page of his work, "The Practical Fly Fisher," published in 1852, are added the words, "More particularly for Grayling or Umber." From that time until 1888 no work of importance wholly devoted to the subject was published, but in that year Mr. Pritt's "Book of the Grayling" appeared, and may be considered the standard work on the subject. The present little work has in truth been a labour of love, as there is no fish that swims—no, not even excepting the trout, of which I am so fond as the "graceful, gliding grayling"; and I trust from the following pages the reader will be able to gather a few useful hints, and have in future a better opinion of this despised fish.

The second portion of the book consists for the most part of "old friends with new faces," being a collection of angling articles and sketches which I have contributed from time to time during the past twenty years to the pages of *The Field*, *Fishing Gazette*, *The Angler*, and *Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement*. To the Editors of those journals I convey my best thanks for permission to republish them, and those of my readers who have perhaps already seen them, being now duly warned, can either scan them over again or "skip" them altogether as they choose.

FRANCIS M. WALBRAN.

Leeds, May 4th, 1895.

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Part 1.

GRAYLING, AND HOW TO CATCH THEM.

GRAYLING, AND HOW TO CATCH THEM.

CHAPTER I.

MORE OR LESS INTRODUCTORY—TROUT AND GRAYLING IN THE
SAME RIVER—TIMES OF SPAWNING.

[T has always been a source of wonder to me why so many sportsmen, who are ardent anglers so long as the trout season lasts, hang up their rods at the end of September, and do not handle them again until the brief sunshine of the short March day attracts them once more to the river side. Allow me to tell them that they miss some of the very best sport of the year. October, November, and December are my favourite angling months, for is it not then that the "graceful, gliding grayling" is in his prime, when he rises freely or capriciously, as the case may be, at the fluttering willow flies or the autumn duns, when he gently stops the tiny float of the hardy winter angler, and when his game struggles and bold attempts for freedom are second to no fish that inhabits British waters, his spotted relative not

even excepted. I am quite certain in my own mind, that this feeling is the result of total ignorance as regards the habits and the sport that this beautiful fish is capable of yielding when fished for at the proper time. A trout in June and December are two totally different things, and it is even so with the grayling. The class of anglers to whom I allude never catch the latter when at his best, and consequently form quite erroneous ideas concerning him. It was with a view of convincing them of the error of their ways that I first undertook to write a series of articles on the subject for my old friend the Editor of *The Angler*. My programme, so far as I arranged it, was, firstly, to give my readers some hints about the habits of grayling; secondly, how to fish for them with fly, both sunk and floating; thirdly, how to "swim the worm" and fish the grasshopper for them, during the winter months; and lastly, to give a few of the best stations in Yorkshire and elsewhere where the fish may be found. That programme I shall again follow out, adding a few chapters on other phases of the sport.

As most of my readers will be aware, the scientific name of the grayling is *Salmo thymallus*, presumably because a freshly-caught fish is supposed to smell of thyme. Now, although I have caught many thousands of graylings in my time, I never could trace the faintest resemblance to the smell of the last-named; but I will defy anyone with his eyes shut to be able

to determine whether it is the odour of a freshly cut cucumber or a fish. In addition to his Latin title the grayling can boast of a great variety of other names, among which may be mentioned umber, locally corrupted in some parts of Yorkshire into oumer and homer. Theakstone, in his valuable work on British Angling Flies, writes—

“Trout rise voracious in the wild March day,
And hungry homer in the snow storms play.”

In France the grayling is styled *L'Ombre Commune*; in Norway, where they attain a large size, *Harren*; in Germany, *Der Asch*. Mr. Pritt, in his standard work on the grayling, has taken an infinite amount of trouble to trace the origin of his name, and seems inclined to the belief that a river called the *Umbro* in Italy, or a province *Umbria* in the vicinity of the same, supplies the true derivative. I am somewhat of opinion that the Latin word *Umbra*, a shadow, is the real source of the name, the fish always presenting the appearance of a grey shadow when seen in his natural element. As regards the English name there seems little doubt but that it is a corruption of *gray-lines*, in reference to the characteristic markings on the sides of the fish, these becoming more pronounced as he gets into better condition. I consider a freshly-caught November grayling one of the handsomest fish that swims, his long slender body tapering down to the broad forked tail, his milk-white belly, and sides of silver, shot

with prismatic hues of faint lilac, green and gold, and last, but by no means least beautiful, his huge dorsal fin of tortoise-shell and purple—all these unite in forming a perfect picture as he lies at your feet on the frozen grass. As a general rule, in a river where trout and grayling thrive in equal proportions you do not find them together at the same time ; for instance, when fishing the worm upstream in low clear water, during June or July, it is very seldom that you catch a grayling, and on the other hand, when “swimming the worm” in November and December a trout very rarely takes the bait. When making an assertion of this kind I always like to substantiate it with facts when possible, and, therefore, will quote a couple of days which I had in 1889. On June 21st, in that year, with a dead low water and blazing sun, I killed forty-six trout and four grayling, weighing 21 lbs. ; and in November, the same year, I had forty-four grayling, weighing 28 lbs., in one day’s fishing, and never saw a trout. This, I say, is incontestable proof that trout and grayling will not interfere in the least with each other in suitable water, not crowded out with coarse fish ; that is where the mistake comes in. Trout and grayling water to be good must be tenanted by those fish alone, as is the case with that particular length of the Wharfe upon which I enjoyed those two “red-letter days” alluded to above.

Grayling spawn in April and May, and are often found in an advanced stage much earlier even than

that, so that in this particular they differ from all the other salmonidæ. It is a very interesting sight to watch them on a good grayling stream during the spawning season. They draw up in shoals on to the gravelly shallows, looking like black logs. There are generally a fair number of trout in attendance picking up as much of the ova as they can. This fact supplies another argument in favour of my theory, that, if anything, the trout do far more harm to the grayling than the latter to the trout, as very few trout deposit their ova in the main stream, but up small becks, where the grayling never goes, whereas the latter always spawn in the river, and at the very time when the trout is becoming desirous of substantial food. Mr. Francis Francis, in his standard "Book on Angling," pronounces a most amusing anathema upon those who take grayling out of season. As many of my readers may not have seen it I offer no apology for quoting the same. He says: "Throw him in again, then, brother fisherman, until at least the middle of July be turned. Whereas if you do take him in May or June listen to my solemn anathema and let it lie heavy on your soul. May your rod top smash at the ferrule and the brazing stick in tight at the commencement of your 'crack day of the season,' and may you be unable to beg, borrow, or steal another rod within twenty miles. May you travel hundreds of miles into a strange country, find the river in splendid ply, and then dis-

cover you have left your reel at home. May you bait a pet pitch for a week in order to have a stunning day with your dear old pal Jorkins, and when you step out in the grey of the morning, with everything in readiness for a slaughtering day, find to your hatred and detestation, that—anathemized—Tomkins fishing it and having no end of sport, such, indeed, as you never had, and hardly hope to have ever again. And now go and catch your grayling in May and June, and much good may they do you. I hope you'll eat 'em—all of 'em—that's all; and that your wife will have locked up the brandy and gone out for a day or two; and please send for Dr. Francis to administer consolation. Ha! ha! ho! I hate a fisherman who slaughters kelts and ill-conditioned fish more than any other species of poacher going. What good does it do him? He has had his sport. Let him be satisfied, and let the poor beast live to grow fat and healthy, and don't take a dirty advantage of starvation and illness. As a Yankee would say, there is something dreadful mean about it." Well said, Mr. Francis; and I feel sure that every angler who has the same affection for the grayling that I have will say the same.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION OF GRAYLING, AND DISTRIBUTION IN THIS
COUNTRY—SIZE TO WHICH THEY ATTAIN.

I HAVE often heard it said that grayling were first introduced into this country by the monks of old; but so far as I can ascertain there is no more tangible proof of this statement than the fact that they are to be found in nearly every stream that has a monastery on its banks; but this may easily be a coincidence only. It is not every river that will suit the habits of grayling. They like quiet gliding flats and eddying runs, with here and there ledges of rocks, and gravelly streams running gradually down into darkened pools. A weedy shallow, with hollow, loamy banks, and a deep swirly hole at the bottom end, is also a favourite abiding place of large grayling. There must be absolutely no pollution of any kind where grayling are expected to thrive, as they are far sooner affected by such than trout are. The river Wharfe from Otley down to Harewood used to abound with grayling, but during recent years they have greatly decreased in numbers. Some thirty years ago one angler killed seventy-five grayling in a single day with fly only. At the present time I doubt very much whether he could accomplish the feat in a week. The sole reason of

their decline may be found at Ilkley and Otley, where all the town's sewage has hitherto been turned direct into the river. There is also a large paper mill which has still more polluted the stream. During the memorable Jubilee year the Wharfe, in common with other Yorkshire rivers, became exceedingly low, and the filth



"THE MEETING OF THE WATERS," BOLTON WOODS.

becoming concentrated, killed large numbers of both trout and grayling ; in fact, on the Otley Club water alone I very often saw twenty good fish taken out dead in one day. Some settling beds have been in course of formation for some time past at Otley, and it is to be hoped that when these are in full operation

the stock of grayling will once more increase from that place downwards.

Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Herefordshire may be said, broadly speaking, to be the best grayling counties in England. In the former the Wye, the Derwent, and the Dove are the principal rivers in which they are found. In Yorkshire the Wharfe, the Yore, the Swale, the Derwent, the Costa, and the Rye all abound with fine grayling, and in Herefordshire there is the Lugg, the Teme, and the Wye, and their numerous tributaries, where suitable to the habits of the fish. In Hampshire and Shropshire I fancy the largest grayling are to be met with. As I write there is a specimen facing me which I caught on the fifth of November, 1891, on the Test. Its weight is 3 lbs. 9 oz. This last-named chalk stream, together with the Hampshire Avon and Itchin, swarm with grayling: some of them are said to be 4 lbs. in weight. The Blyth and the Churnet in Staffordshire also contain large specimens, which are ready risers during the autumn months.

The size to which the grayling attains is altogether a question of the nature of the stream. On such rivers as the Costa, the Test, or the Itchin, where there are gravelly shallows covered with waving weed beds, they grow to a large size, their food consisting chiefly of fresh-water shimps, larvæ, and the like. But on moderately rapid waters, such as the Rye, Wharfe, or Yore, a pound fish is considered a good

one; in fact, during an experience extending over thirty years, I have never killed a grayling weighing more than 1 lb. 6 oz. on either the Wharfe or the Yore. On the lower portion of the Rye some large specimens are, I believe, sometimes taken.

Grayling have been introduced during the past ten years into several of the Scotch rivers, but in none of them have they done so well as in the Clyde. I have at present an inclination to journey thither during the coming winter, the only thing that deters me being the prospect of the long railway journey. Should I bring my courage up to striking point I may be able to give you my experiences. So far as I am aware no Irish waters contain grayling. Abroad they may be found in Norway, in the Scandinavian rivers and lakes, and also in many of the German and Swiss waters.

As regards appearance they vary greatly. I have frequently hooked grayling which looked so golden in the water that I mistook them for trout until they were in the net, but when in the height of condition they more closely resemble a bar of mother-of-pearl. The large Costa grayling are not nearly so handsome as their Hampshire brethren. They partake more of a chub character, and lack the brilliant black spots and delicate tints of those taken from a southern chalk stream.

There is one other English river which always appears to me a typical grayling stream, and that is the Eden. Some years ago Mr. C. D. Thompson, of

Seaton Carew, near Hartlepool, tried the experiment of introducing a few near Kirkby Stephen, and for a long time nothing more was seen of them. During the past few years several three-quarter pound fish have been taken, and I have had unmistakable proofs that in the neighbourhood of Kirkby Stephen and Kirkby Thore they are progressing splendidly. The whole length of the river is eminently adapted to them, and I hope that in due course of time the river Eden will be counted among our English grayling streams. In the neighbourhood of Carlisle I have so often heard chub styled grayling, that I was very chary of belief that the specimens caught were the genuine article, until I had seen them. *Apropos* of the above-named popular error, I recollect being one evening in the shop of a friend of mine in Scotch Street, Carlisle, when a local angler came in, and the conversation turned on to the subject of grayling. "But you have none here," I said. "Have none," he replied; "of course we have—plenty." I pursued the argument further, but failed to convince him of the error of his ways, and therefore determined to bring some with me upon the occasion of my next visit to the Border city. Three months had passed, and chill November arrived. I had once again to take my north journey, and on the way had a day's grayling fishing on the Yore, at Hawes. Sport was good, and at night I travelled on to Carlisle, with a pannier full. Proceeding on to my friend's shop, the

fish were arranged on a large meat dish, and the knowing-one was sent for. "Well," I said, on his arrival, "what are these?" He looked completely puzzled ; and then acknowledged that he had never seen their like before. "No," I replied ; "I felt sure you had never seen a grayling"—(curtain). There is a small river in the county of Durham, near Consett, called the Derwent. It would be a most picturesque stream were it not for the presence of numerous coal pits and their murky surroundings. Some years ago my friend, Mr. Palliaser, who was then the secretary to the Derwent Angling Association, invited me to inspect the river, and advise the club on the introduction of grayling. I therefore went, and found the water suitable in every respect excepting one, and that was the presence of mine water, which I feared would interfere with such a delicate fish, although trout appeared to thrive well. The surface of the water in places was covered with a thick white scum, and casting their flies into this, the local anglers had excellent sport among the trout. Above a small village called Shotley Bridge the water was purer, but not so well adapted for grayling as the lower water. I told Mr. Palliaser that I was afraid the pollutions would interfere with their designs, but that there could be no great harm done by turning a few yearlings into the stream above Shotley Bridge. This was done ; and the last time that I heard anything was to the effect that they were thriving amazingly.

CHAPTER III.

FLY-FISHING FOR GRAYLING—LIST OF FLIES AND DRESSINGS.

SO much for the habits of the grayling. Now let us come to the more practical portion of my subject, viz. : How to catch them. In the first place let it be distinctly understood that the ways of trout and grayling in rising at the artificial fly—for that is the method we will consider first—are as widely different as light and dark, so that an expert trout fly-fisher has a good deal to learn before he will be able to become equally successful with grayling. There is no mistaking the sharp plop which denotes the rise of the trout ; but a pound grayling very often only makes a dimple like a two-ounce dace, and more frequently still, never breaks the surface of the water at all, a white flash being all that the angler sees. He is not so timid as his speckled relative ; and, although a grayling may refuse a fly a dozen times, he very often changes his mind at last and so meets his fate. Possibly this may be one of the reasons why Mr. Francis termed this fish “the lady of the streams.” This was exemplified in a very striking manner one day in November, 1891, when Mr. Halford and I were fishing on the Test, at Stockbridge. Above a spot familiarly known as “The

Boot Island," was a long narrow shelving gravel bed, where the water ran, perhaps, a foot in depth. Three or four good fish were in this place, and Mr. H., after a good deal of strategy, contrived to float a gold-ribbed hare's ear beautifully over them. It was a long and very difficult cast, and I certainly hoped to see his skill meet with due reward ; but no, not one solitary rise could he obtain, and was just going to give up the attempt when I asked him to have another throw. He did so, and up came one of the fish as though it had never seen the fly before, and it must have been over his head at least a dozen times. A hard fight ensued, for it was soon evident that the fish was a heavy one. We had a hedge or two to negotiate before we could get on terms with him, and then I netted a lovely grayling weighing exactly 3 lbs. Such was the reward of perseverance. It would be very difficult to state definitely what is the most suitable day for fly-fishing for grayling, but, as a general rule, I prefer one of those hazy days following on a sharp frosty night in September or October. The cold has the effect of clearing away the numerous midges which have so frequently foiled the angler's skill in August, and if a rise of the autumn duns comes on about mid-day, then is the time. I have frequently had grand sport with fly, on a dull, drizzling day in November, and even in December. If the weather is open, grayling often rise well during the few hours of brief sunshine in the middle of the day.

One thing, however, is certain, and that is, if the angler wishes to kill a good basket, he must persevere from the beginning of the day to the end of it. It is no use fooling about on the bank smoking, just because you have not had a rise for a couple of hours, for you may, by so doing, miss the sport of the day. You cannot tell whether the fish are "coming on" by watching the surface of the stream, as in trout fishing, because very often grayling take under water only. I will give an instance of this. Fishing on a small tributary of the Yore, on September 22nd, 1891, I rose grayling at every cast, but not a single fish broke the surface of the water. All that was visible was a flash about six inches below. What possessed them I do not know, and probably never shall, but out of all these rises I only secured one fish. The others apparently stopped short about an inch from my sunken flies. I began to think it was my own fault, and after about an hour of it, went up stream to a friend who accompanied me, to see how he had fared. Exactly the same as myself, I found, so I took off my fly cast and took to "swimming" the maggot. They took this bait right enough, and I finished up with a handsome basket of twenty-two fish. So much for perseverance again. In fly-fishing for trout I almost invariably, unless the water is coloured, fish up stream, but in the case of grayling I generally cast across, and allow the flies to float a little way down. Of course, I begin at the bottom

of a stream all the same, and when a fish is hooked pull him down stream, and play him out below.

Before proceeding to describe the dressings of the different flies which I have found most successful with grayling, I should like to say a word or two about the cast, which cannot be too fine. I always use drawn gut myself, and construct my cast as follows:—For the first yard (*i.e.*, nearest the reel) I employ 2x degree of gut, for the next yard 3x, and for the last one 4x, or gossamer gut, as it is often termed. This makes a beautiful taper cast, strong enough in experienced hands to land anything up to four pounds if the water is free from obstructions.

There are three distinct classes of flies for grayling fishing: firstly, ordinary winged or hackled imitations of natural flies, to be fished wet, or underneath the surface of the water; secondly, what are termed “fancy flies,” unlike anything in creation, but greatly favoured by grayling; and, thirdly, split winged or floating duns, for use when the fish are rising madly at surface food, or will take no other. We will take them in the order named:—

LIST OF ORDINARY WINGED OR HACKLED FLIES
FOR WET FISHING.

- No. 1.—The *Water Hen Blos.*—Body, yellow silk, dubbed with water rat's fur; hackled with the inside feather from a water hen's wing; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—On cold days, either in early spring or autumn, there is no better fly than the foregoing. I vary it by wrapping the hackle on a smooth body of yellow quill, and I am by no means certain whether this is not the best pattern to employ. However, my readers can try both and judge for themselves.

No. 2.—The *Dark Spanish Needle*.—Body, orange silk well waxed; hackled with a small feather from a brown owl, a swift, or the rump of a field-fare; hook No. 0, long shank, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This is a splendid grayling fly. In fact, when it is strongly on the water they frequently will take no other. Francis, in his "Book on Angling," advises a winged pattern, but on our Yorkshire and Derbyshire streams the above dressing will generally be found the best killer.

No. 3.—The *Blue Hawk*.—Body, orange silk, dubbed with water rat's fur; hackled with the steely blue feather from a merlin hawk; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—The late Rev. T. Challinor, of Newton Kyme, who, in his day, was probably one of the most expert fly-fishers on the Wharfe, first brought this fly under my notice. He avers that it is, bar none, the very best autumn fly for grayling, and I must confess it is a "nailer." On certain days it kills best with a plain body of apple green silk, and a head formed with a single turn of crimson floss.

No. 4.—The *Poult Bloa*.—Body, yellow silk, dubbed with red fur from a squirrel; hackled with the slaty blue feather from under the wing of a young grouse; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This is a favourite Yorkshire pattern. It is also dressed with a plain yellow silk body, varied sometimes with a turn or two of fine gold wire. There are only very few suitable feathers in a wing, and none but the very young birds produce any of the correct shade. As soon as the weather becomes cold the natural fly has a rusty hue which the squirrel's fur imitates very closely.

No. 5.—The *Fog Black*.—Body, dark purple silk, dubbed with dark heron's harl; legs from a starling's neck; wings from a bullfinch's wing; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This fly derives its name from the fact that it is bred in short grass after hay time. This in the North is termed "fog." It is an excellent autumn grayling fly, especially on dull days. No other feather will do as a substitute for the wings. It is sometimes dressed as a hackle fly, but I prefer the winged pattern myself.

No. 6.—The *Orange Midge*.—Body, orange silk; legs, black hackle; wings, pale starling, very small; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This is a minute insect which grayling take with avidity during the latter part of August and

September. When the leaves begin to come down the streams it is better to vary the dressing with an apple-green body.

No. 7.—The *Dark Snipe and Purple*.—Body, dark purple silk, well waxed; hackled with the feather from outside of a jack snipe's wing; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—An excellent spring and autumn fly; best on cold dull days.

No. 8.—The *Throstle Wing*.—Body, cinnamon coloured silk, dubbed with red squirrel's fur; hackled with feather from a throstle's (thrush's) wing; hook, No. 1, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A pattern not generally known, but an excellent killer, nevertheless. It was shown to me in the first instance by Ambrose Cawood, who was then keeper on the Otley Club water. It was on a September afternoon when I could do nothing with the grayling, which were rising freely at the natural fly. I soon discovered its efficacy, and finished up with a good basket. A winged pattern is used in Derbyshire with very satisfactory results.

No. 9.—The *Dark Olive Blos*.—Body, lead-coloured silk; legs, dark olive or black hackle; tail, three small rabbit's whiskers; wings, inside of water hen's wing; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—One of Jackson's patterns. A good fly

on dull warm days, from September to the end of the season.

No. 10.—The *Small Willow Fly*.—Body, yellow silk, dubbed with water rat's fur ; hackled with a blue cock's hackle, having golden tips ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A noted grayling fly on any water. In the Hereford and Worcester districts a blue quill body is used with the same hackle.

No. 11.—The *Cinnamon Fly*.—Body, harl from a cock pheasant's tail feather, ribbed on buff coloured silk ; legs, ginger cock's hackle ; wings, the ruddy brown feather from a landrail ; hook, No. 1, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—One of the best September flies for either trout or grayling. Best taken in mild, showery weather.

No. 12.—The *Grey Palmer*.—Body, black silk, ribbed with fine silver wire ; hackled all the way up with a grey hackle, having a black centre ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—When the house fly becomes weakened by cold weather and falls on the water this fly is prime favourite. October is the best month during which to use it.

No. 13.—The *Small Ant*.—Body, golden brown

peacock's harl ; hackled with a feather from a wren ; hook, No. 0 (short shank), Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—The best dressing of the ant, which is generally winged. Good during the latter portion of August and the whole of September.

No. 14.—The *Smoke Fly*.—Body, brown bronze peacock's harl ; hackled with feather from under a young grouse's wing (as in the dressing of the poult bloa) ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Sometimes varied with a ribbing of silver wire. Called the "Little Chap" in Derbyshire.

I could considerably extend this list, but it would not benefit my readers, as with these fourteen patterns in his book the angler need not fear to visit any grayling water in the kingdom. So far as I am able, I have specified the time suitable for each ; but, of course, it is impossible to lay down any definite rule, as the season has a good deal to do with the time when the natural flies appear.

One of the chief characteristics of the grayling is its partiality for flies having bodies of gold or silver and tags of different hues. These, as I remarked before, resemble nothing in the shape of insect life, and therefore are generally termed "fancy flies." It is well, however, to stick to imitations of the real thing until the sharp frosty nights of November begin to clear the water of naturals and their nymphæ. A red tag or green insect may be used as a tail fly, but

the droppers should be selected from the list given above. I will now give the dressings of those which I have proved the most effective, with any remarks thereon that I consider useful.

No. 1.—The *Red Tag*.—Body, bright green harl from the “moon” of a peacock’s feather ; hackle, bright red cock’s ; tag, bright red wool ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This probably is the very best among the whole list of fancy grayling flies. I was the first to introduce it into the Yorkshire rivers, and its marked success soon made it a leading favourite. A Worcester gentleman gave me a pattern among others, in 1878, and the very first time that I used it on the Yore, I killed no less than twenty-five fine grayling through its agency. Sometimes I add a turn of gold tinsel under the red tag. Wool is preferable to floss silk as the latter soon gets sodden and discoloured.

No. 2.—The *Green Insect*.—Body, bright green peacock’s harl ; hackled with a soft silver grey hen’s feather ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Some anglers insist that this is taken for a small green aphid, which is bred among the decaying leaves of autumn. It may be so ; but the theory certainly does not hold good when a red wool tag is added, and in the latter form it generally takes the best. A reverend gentleman in Derbyshire tells me that during September he kills a great many trout

on this fly, minus the red tag. On the Welsh river, Vyrnwy, it is a noted killer.

No. 3.—The *Orange Bumble*.—Body, orange floss silk, ribbed with a strand of peacock's sword feather and fine flat gold tinsel; hackle, honey dun cock, wrapped all down the body; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—The above is one of Mr. Halford's patterns. He says that it has obtained such a reputation among Hampshire anglers for its killing properties that it has been styled the "Priceless Bumble." On the Yorkshire rivers I never found the series of bumbles kill so well as on the Derbyshire Derwent, Wye, and Dove

No. 4.—The *Honey Dun Bumble*.—Body, salmon-coloured floss silk, ribbed with a strand of peacock's sword feather; hackled with a pure honey dun hen's feather; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A great favourite with the late David Foster, and a good killer on the Derbyshire rivers.

No. 5.—The *Claret Bumble*.—Body, claret floss silk, ribbed with a strand of peacock's sword feather; hackle, medium blue dun cock's; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This is a grand September and October fly, and is the one exception to the bumble series

that I have found to kill on almost any river. It is also called the Ruby and the Mulberry Bumble.

No. 6.—The *Corkscrew*.—Body, the quill of a red-brown partridge's tail feather, from which the plume has been entirely cut away with scissors; hackle, brown ginger cock's; hook, No. 1, 0, or 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Another of the patterns given in Mr. Halford's splendid work, "Floating Flies, and how to dress them." The author remarks that before using the quill for the body the tyer is to flatten it well by drawing it backwards and forwards between the thumb nail and forefinger. The pattern was originated by Mr. Marryatt, of Salisbury, who is probably the best dry fly-fisher in the kingdom, and in a coloured water is said to be irresistible.

No. 7.—*Bradshaw's Fancy*.—Body, copper-coloured peacock's harl; hackled with a feather from the neck of a Norwegian crow; tag, bright crimson silk (or wool), with a couple of turns of the same at the head; tying silk, dark purple; hook, No. 1 or 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Mr. Henry Bradshaw, of Bramley, near Leeds, is one of the most enthusiastic and successful anglers of my acquaintance. To his inventive genius is due the creation of this fly, which is a "nailer" wherever it is used. This, like the green insect, is an excellent trout fly in September. In fact it is the

only one of the red tag series that I ever knew trout favour. Mr. Bradshaw, on the Yorkshire Anglers' Association's length of the Eamont, in 1890, killed from twenty to thirty trout a day with it, while other anglers were doing nothing with the ordinary local patterns. I can thoroughly recommend this fly for use on any grayling stream, wherever situated.

No. 8.—*Golden Crow*.—Body, plain gold tinsel ; hackled with a feather from the breast of a Norwegian crow ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Another of Mr. Bradshaw's patterns. On the Costa, at Pickering, this is a very good killer. I always give it a trial on any river during those brief gleams of sunshine which at times brighten the gloom of a December day, with frost and snow around ; then it is particularly effective.

No. 9.—The *Silver or Winter Dun*.—Body, flat silver tinsel evenly laid on ; legs, light blue dun hen's hackle ; wings, pale starling ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Another favourite with the late David Foster, and beyond doubt one, if not the best, of the flies to use on a frosty winter's day, with occasional gleams of sunshine. Some ten years ago I went for a day's grayling fishing on to the Yore above Masham. It was a bitterly cold day, with the ground a foot deep in snow. Up to mid-day the fish took the worm fairly well ; then a feeble ray of sunlight lit up the

landscape, and I saw a faint dimple appear on the flat below me. I immediately mounted a silver dun and had the fish the very first cast. To curtail the story I killed a dozen good grayling all on this fly in less than hour, then the sun sank in the western sky and the worm came again into requisition. I had equally good sport upon another occasion at Tanfield with the same fly.

No. 10.—*Marryatt's Ibis Tag*.—Body, a strand of macaw tail feather, stripped between the thumb nail and forefinger, and wrapped carefully on, so as to show alternate rings of blue and yellow; hackled with a blood-red cock's hackle; tag, scarlet, Ibis feather; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—One of Mr. Marryatt's patterns, and a great favourite in south country chalk streams; it kills equally well elsewhere, and there is no doubt whatever that the brilliant scarlet of the natural feather long outlives that of either wool or floss silk.

No. 11.—The *Yellow Bumble*.—Body, lemon colour, silk ribbed, with a strand of bronze harl; hackled all the way up with a blue cock's hackle; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A very good pattern on the Staffordshire streams.

No. 12.—The *Gold Tag*.—Body, bright green harl; tag, broad gold tinsel; hackled with a blood-red cock's hackle; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—'This is not a generally-known pattern, but on bright days is a very good killer until the end of the season.

The foregoing twelve patterns of fancy grayling flies are amply sufficient for any river in the kingdom. As I remarked before, this class of artificial answers best when the water is clear of natural flies, but a Red Tag or Bradshaw's Fancy may be used at point throughout the season.

Fancy flies are generally taken best when deeply sunken. If the angler sees the faintest gleam below the surface he should tighten his line at once; and will, in nine cases out of ten, hook his fish, unless they are coming very short.

There are times, as I have stated previously, when grayling will not look at the sunken fly, either winged or hackled, and then the southern system of fishing with a single floating fly answers the best. The first time that I had a practical illustration of this was on October 10th, 1886. Mr. Wm. Senior, the angling editor of the *Field*, was fishing with me on the Yore, at Tanfield. All the morning we were unable to do anything, either with fly or worm. It was a lovely autumnal day, and the water was in beautiful condition. Every likely pattern of hackle fly we could think of had been tried in vain, and about one o'clock we sat down by the edge of a plantation and smoked our pipes in solemn silence. Opposite to where we were sitting was a small island, and just above it a

beautiful grayling flat, upon which half-a-dozen good fish were rising incessantly. I had tried them for fully half-an-hour with fly before we sat down, but never had even an offer. Suddenly my friend sprang to his feet, and grasping his rod and net, expressed his intention to try them with dry fly. After floating several patterns of duns over them, he mounted a Red Tag made with an ibis tail, and fished it dry. At the very first cast he was fast into one of those obdurate grayling, which I duly netted for him. In less than half-an-hour he had killed other four, and not one of them was under three-quarters of a pound. The effect of that lesson was not lost on me, and I immediately set about practising the art, so that if I come across a similar experience I always am master of the situation.

In Hampshire wading is seldom resorted to, and the angler generally fishes kneeling down; but the best plan on such streams as are found in the North is to find an eddying flat, or a pool some eighteen inches in depth, and wade very carefully into mid-stream, stand perfectly still, looking up the water, and watch for rising fish, then deliver your single fly about a yard above the rise, letting it float over the spot without any drag whatever. The latter is fatal to success, and to accomplish the feat is the most difficult part of the whole matter. Recently several masters of the art have taken to anointing the wings of their fly with a little odourless paraffin, but unless

this operation is very carefully performed I fear that the oil, which is very penetrating, will dissolve the wax and varnish, causing the fly to come undone. It certainly causes the fly to float much better, and saves a great deal of labour in drying it in the air. I will now give the dressing of twelve patterns which are the best for this style of fishing.

No. 1.—The *Pale Autumn Dun*.—Body, pale yellow silk, dubbed with rust coloured squirrel's fur ; legs, pale honey dun ; wings, the slatey blue feather from a tern's wing, set well up ; hook, No. 0, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—I place this pattern the first on the list, because I believe that it is the very best that can be used for grayling when they are taking the tiny autumn duns on the surface. The natural fly, of which the above is an imitation, does not appear regularly. Some seasons only very few are to be found, and perhaps the next autumn they hatch out in myriads. Such was the case in 1888. In September of that year, I fished the Burnsall club water, on the Wharfe, in company with a very expert fly-fisher, and although large grayling were rising all around us we only landed three fish between us. It was most exasperating. I took a dozen of the natural flies home with me in spirit, and made many experiments. The above dressing was the result. I have given pattern flies to many noted anglers, all of whom have given it an

excellent character. One well-known Derbyshire fisherman wrote to tell me it was the best grayling fly he had ever used on the Wye, Dove, and Derwent.

No. 2.—The *Adjutant Blue*.—Body, a strand from the pinion or tail feather of an adjutant, stripped on the edge only, by tearing down the longer flue with the thumb and forefinger of the left hand; legs and tail, blue Andalusian hackle; wings, medium starling; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—One of Mr. Halford's patterns, and a splendid killer during October. It is an imitation of the October tint of the iron blue.

No. 3.—*Iron Blue (A)*.—Body, peacock quill, dyed in slate dye, or a strip of the quill from one of the outside small feathers of a coot's wing, which will be found exactly the right shade; legs and tail, dark blue Andalusian hackle; wings, tom-tit tail; hook, No. 000, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A splendid imitation of the iron blue, and one that will kill anywhere when that fly is on the water.

No. 4.—The *Nailer*.—Head and tail, bright red pig's wool, hackled all up the body with a thick bright red cock's hackle, which must be afterwards cut to shape, *i.e.*, the red points cut off all round; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A new pattern strongly recommended by the writer of an article on grayling fishing, which appeared in *The Angler*, November 26th, 1892. On one occasion he killed nine brace of good grayling by means of it.

No. 5.—*Dark Autumn Dun*.—Body, heron's harl, undyed; legs and tail, purest blue dun hackle; wings, snipe; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—One of Mr. Halford's patterns. Kills best after the Pale Autumn Dun has been killed off with early frosts.

No. 6.—*Jenny Spinner*.—Body, detached and formed of white horsehair worked on undyed bristle, with a few turns of crimson tying silk at both ends; tail, pale cream hackle; hackled with a badger cock's hackle; hook, No. 000, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This fly is the imago of the Iron Blue Dun, and is such a delicate little fly that at times the angler is completely puzzled to tell at what the fish are rising. Mr. Aldam, in his splendid work on fly making, recounts a day's sport among the grayling which he had once on the Derwent at Chatsworth. The fish were rising on all sides of him, but he could not catch them, and it was only when a natural fly settled on his coat sleeve that he saw that it was the Jenny Spinner. Coming ashore he sat down and dressed an artificial, with the result that he filled a

splendid basket. I once had a similar experience on the river Dove, but that was with the trout during a day in September, about ten years ago.

No. 7.—The *Little Marryat*.—Body, fur from the flank of an Australian opossum ; legs and tail, pale buff cochin cock ; wings, palest starling ; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—This is an imitation of the pale watery dun prevalent during August, September and October, and is the invention of Mr. George Selwyn Marryat, my friend. When I was fishing on the Test in his company in September, 1891, he told me that he hardly ever uses any other floating fly during the three months named, and he certainly kills as many fish as any one. A friend of mine who fishes the Costa and Yorkshire Derwent a good deal tells me that it is a deadly fly on those streams.

No. 8.—*Blue Winged Olive*.—Body, peacock's quill, dyed pale olive ; legs and tail, hackle dyed the same ; wings, pale coot ; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—An excellent afternoon fly during August, September, and October. It is another of Mr. Halford's patterns.

No. 9.—*Indian Yellow*.—Body, floss silk about the colour of natural Russia leather, ribbed with bright lemon yellow tying silk ; legs and tail,

pale buff coloured cochin cock ; head, three or four turns of orange tying silk ; wings, the pale slate-coloured feather from under a young grouse's wing, same as is used for the Poult Bloa ; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Another of Mr. Aldam's patterns, and a most excellent one for grayling as well as trout.

No. 10.—*Red Ant.*—Body, orange tying silk ; butt, copper coloured peacock's harl ; legs, red game cock ; wings, palest starling ; hook, No. 00, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A first-rate September fly for grayling ; will also kill during August.

No. 11.—*Drake's Extractor.*—Body, pale yellow olive floss silk, ribbed with fine gold wire ; hackle, white cock's, dyed in green olive dye, carried down the entire length of body, from shoulder to tail ; tail fan the same ; wings, pale starling ; hook, No. 000, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—Given by Mr. Halford in his standard work on floating flies. It derives its name from the inventor, who was a noted Hampshire fly-fisher.

No. 12.—*The Orange Dun.*—Body, bright orange silk ; legs, ginger cock's hackle ; wings, palest starling ; hook, No. 000, Kendal scale.

REMARKS.—A capital grayling fly in a clearing water, either during August or September.

34 *Grayling, and how to catch them.*

These twelve patterns are sufficient for any grayling river in this country, and may be fully relied on as having been thoroughly tested by the most experienced and successful fly-fishers.

CHAPTER IV.

SWIMMING THE WORM—ROD, REEL, LINE, FLOATS, HOOKS, ETC.

AND now we approach branches of grayling fishing of which I am exceedingly fond, viz., swimming the worm in winter, swimming the maggot, and also artificial grasshopper fishing. In my opinion these handsome fish never get into really first-class condition until winter has set in; and then, of course, it is useless endeavouring to catch them with fly, although even in open weather, during December, I have taken them by means of that lure. A September grayling is far superior to an August one; taken in October he is better still; and those killed in November and December are best of all. After that they begin to go back until the middle of February, when it is time to lay aside the rod until the fitful showers and gleams of sunshine of April summon the angler once again to the riverside to cast the mimic fly over the rising trout.

In the first place I would ask the question, why should the angler not fish during the winter months? To me it is quite as enjoyable as during the fickle months of spring, the glory of midsummer, or the golden days of autumn. All are beautiful. I have

fished on hundreds of bright winters' days, when the air has been as invigorating as a glass of good champagne, when the pure white snow—very different to the filthy slush found in the dismal town—has sparkled in the sun's feeble rays like diamonds; when every twig and bough have been feathered with snowy flakes, and icicles depended from the grey rocks; when I have felt that you owed a debt of the deepest gratitude to your Maker that you were strong and well, so as to be able to admire the beauties of Nature throughout the whole year. Cold, do you say? Not a bit of it, my friend. *You* may shiver as you huddle up to the fire and look out of the window at the white mantle spread around, but the winter grayling fisher, standing knee-deep in the crystal water, is as warm as a toast. Take my word for it. I have waded every winter for over thirty years, and I can say what few can—but in no boasting spirit—that I have got to find out what rheumatism means.

This leads up to the first, and perhaps most important, point, viz., what your winter clothing should be when bound on this kind of expedition. In the first place allow me to tell you I never change from flannel to linen undergarments throughout the entire year. The English climate is so variable that I consider it the height of folly to do so. The following is what I advise the winter angler to wear:—A thick flannel shirt with collar attached, flannel drawers, a thick knitted woollen jersey with sleeves, and over all a

good honest homespun tweed suit lined with flannel. This may sound rather a large order, but remember that you cannot wear an overcoat, so due allowance must be made for that garment. Whether you are teetotal or not I strongly advise a flask of the best brandy to be taken, as on two occasions I believe that an observance of this rule has saved me from serious illness, which would doubtless have resulted from an immersion in icy cold water. I need hardly say that should such an accident occur, no time should be lost in effecting an entire change of clothing, coupled with a hot bath if obtainable.

The rod most suitable for this style of fishing is either a whole or built cane rod, measuring twelve feet, not too supple, and fitted with snake or upright steel rings. Should the angler not be able to afford one of these, a good honestly-made rod, having an ash butt, hickory centre, and lancewood top, will answer the purpose equally well ; but is, of course, a little heavier.

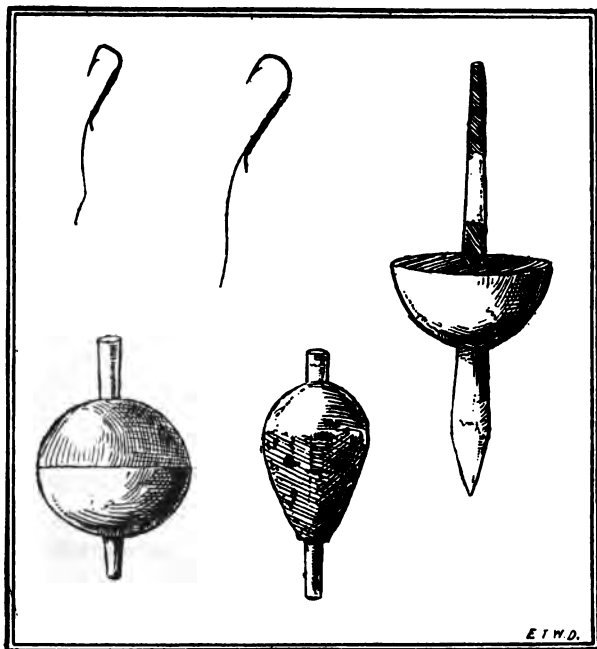
The best reel of all is an ebonite one of the Nottingham pattern, but with bars as in Mr. Slater's patent. The wooden ones are apt to swell, and something generally goes wrong just when you have hooked the best fish of the day. A reel three inches in diameter is the best size to employ.

The line should be the finest waterproof plaited silk that is made, as the slightest drag on the float is fatal.

Now for the tackle itself. The cast should be not less than three yards, the first yard formed of 1 x drawn gut, the second of 2 x, and the third of 3 x, with the exception of the last sixteen inches which must be of 4 x, or gossamer gut as it is called. On this, wrap with crimson silk a fine wire round-bend hook as illustrated, or a sneck-bend as also shown. I used formerly to employ the round-bend, but during the last ten years I have adopted the latter, as I find them less liable to lose their hold, and another reason being that the fish take them into their mouths with the worm more readily, thus causing fewer false bites. The top of the shank must be slightly bent out, or "cranked" as it is termed, in order to keep the head of the worm in its place.

Small brandlings or gilt tail worms are the only kind that are of any use in this kind of fishing; I prefer the latter myself. The point of the hook should be inserted a little way below the head of the worm, and threaded carefully up the shank until the head is secured by the bent out portion at the top. The tail must hang straight down, the bend of the hook being exposed. A single shot is attached eight or ten inches above the hook, and then your tackle is complete. Stay, there is the float to be considered. I give three examples of this part of the outfit. The round float is the kind I generally employ, finding that it gives the best indication of a bite. The upper part is red, the under side the colour of natural cork varnished.

The float shown in the centre of the three is a pattern used pretty universally, the colouring being the same as in the former. The other with the long wedge is a float specially designed by Mr. Pritt, and illustrated



in his "book of the grayling." In rough foamy water, such as the foot of a weir, this float is very useful. It is not adapted, however, for smoothly gliding water.

It may be taken as a general rule that from sixteen

to eighteen inches is the correct depth at which to fix the float ; the bait should swim six inches from the bottom, and so differs considerably from worm fishing for trout. If the river is low and clear, frost is an absolute necessity, but if there is a little colour in the water, grayling will on certain days take either worm or maggot when the temperature is much higher. The past season has been an exceptionally bad one, but the best basket I made was on a warm muggy day, with heavy rainfall and slightly coloured water.

The tails of rough rocky streams are usually the abiding places of grayling during the autumn and winter months ; also, long gliding flats, about two feet in depth, or where a ledge of rocks dips into a hole with a gravelly bottom. Here the grayling congregate together, and several may be taken if the rest are not disturbed. The best method of fishing a stream is to wade in at the bottom end and cast the bait and float with an underhand throw a little above you, allowing it to swim down below where you are standing. Grayling take the worm in quite a different manner to trout. They also take it in a variety of ways. Sometimes the float only stops for a second, and then proceeds on its course as before, but the practised hand knows that it is a wary bite, and by sticking to the spot, frequently kills the fish at last. I well recollect such an instance which occurred some ten years ago, at Hawes on the Yore. James Blades, the well-known professional angler, was watching me

fish the middle of a stream, half way between Hawes and Bainbridge. Suddenly I had one of the kind of bites just recorded. I turned my wrist—no result except the loss of the entire worm. Baiting again, I carefully swum over the same place. Ditto. To cut the story short, six worms disappeared in a similar manner, one after the other. We simply gazed at each other in astonishment. The next time I selected the very smallest worm I could find in my bag, and that did the trick, for a fine $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. grayling was hooked and ultimately landed. How they contrive to take the whole of the worm off the hook without even taking the float under is always a complete mystery to me. Another very favourite dodge with these cunning fish is to follow the bait all the way down the swim, and making a grab at it just as it rises with the drag of the float. If the angler be an old fisher, he raises his hand gently at the end of the swim without jerking it out sharply for the next throw. A novice, not suspecting the presence of a fish, pulls out quickly, and a breakage of the fine tackle is an absolute certainty.

CHAPTER V.

MAGGOT AND GRASSHOPPER FISHING.

[T may, perhaps, be on account of my great liking for worm fishing for grayling that I am inclined to view the use of any other bait with a certain amount of contempt; maggot fishing savours too much of the seeking after coarse fish, but still my work would not be complete without reference to this branch of the art of catching *Salmo Thymallus*. The same rod, reel, and line, that I have advised for worm fishing will answer the purpose very well, but the tackle and float is somewhat different. To the end of a three-yard tapered gut cast, wrap a No. 2 sneck-bend hook, Kendal scale, using white silk for the purpose. The two shapes of floats I recommend are shewn, one being composed of celluloid with ivory tips coloured red, and the other of cork and porcupine quill; the latter is most effective in rapidly running water, and the celluloid one in gliding flats or the tail end of streams.



One single shot to be used, as in worm fishing. Some experts use a still smaller hook, say No. 1, with a single maggot, while others advocate one maggot threaded up the shank of the hook, and another impaled through the head on the point: I consider the latter plan the best, as it gives more animation to the bait. A few maggots should be thrown in from time to time, as in roach fishing, but this must only be done very sparingly. I never think myself that the maggot is taken so eagerly as the worm after August, and then best of all in a clearing water after a flood—at such times I have known phenomenal baskets of both trout and grayling to be made. I have been told, with what amount of truth I cannot say, that the neighbourhood of corn mills is particularly suitable for this style of grayling fishing.

The grasshopper is not, as may be supposed, that agile little insect that you see hopping about in the meadow grass, but an artificial bait which more resembles a large gooseberry than anything in creation. It is made as follows :—On a Limerick bend hook, size about No. 6, Kendal scale, is wound some lead wire in a spherical form ; over this foundation bright green Berlin wool is wrapped, with a broad tag of scarlet ; a ribbing of yellow completes the monstrosity. Another pattern is as above, with the addition of two strips of straw down each side of the bait, and a small triangle hook, No. 1, Kendal scale, attached to

a loose thread of gut the length of the "grasshopper." The following is the *modus operandi*:—A stiff bamboo rod is generally used, and a fine waterproof silk line similar to the one recommended for worm fishing. The "grasshopper" is attached to the end of a tapered three-yard gut cast, and about an inch of quill fixed exactly to allow the bait to touch the bottom. This tiny float is not used as in the ordinary way, so as to detect a bite, but to show the angler when the bait touches the ground; then it must be worked with a sink and draw action of the wrist. An eddy-ing, swirly hole is the best place in which to fish this curious lure, and it is said that the addition of three or four maggots on the tip of the hook greatly increases its attractiveness. The most singular feature of it is that on no grayling streams does the "grasshopper" answer so well as the Worcestershire streams. I have tried it on all the Yorkshire rivers and also in Derbyshire, but without success, and yet it is so deadly on the Teme that there is a rule in the famous Leinwardine club that members can only fish it on a limited number of days in a year. When a large grayling (and they generally are large ones that come at this lure) takes the bait, there is no mistake about it, as it feels as though someone had suddenly hung a heavy weight at the end of your line. After that play him boldly and get him into the net as soon as you can, so as not to disturb the rest of the occupants of the hole.

This concludes the list of methods by which this beautiful fish may be taken, and I trust that by omitting all technicalities I have succeeded in making the same perfectly plain to my readers. One might have written many chapters, but my idea was not so much the production of a *book*, as the bringing before anglers a form of sport to which I am most passionately attached, and which, except in a few localities, is far too little practised.

DAYS WITH THE GRAYLING.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SPORTSMAN.

IN THE FIRST FROST.

I AM really beginning to believe that there is such a thing in this world of disappointment as luck. My good friend "Red Spinner" has told me for many years past he considered me to be one of the luckiest men he knew. He has often and often enumerated a long list of circumstances which have contributed to that belief, but he always winds up by saying, "and your angling luck is perfectly exasperating." What has somewhat converted me to his way of thinking is the series of adverse circumstances which always attend him when he goes a-fishing. If, for instance, he journeys from London to Yorkshire for a turn at the grayling, as soon as ever he sets foot in the county the heavens open and a flood is a certainty. When he goes to the Tweed to wage war against the salmon, there is usually only one day out of six that he can fish at all, on account of high waters, or else there

is no water whatever to speak of for six days, and as he leaves in the evening of the sixth day it begins to rain in that persistent manner which heralds a flood on the Monday ; and lastly, when I arranged to run down into Hampshire to join him and friend Halford, fate once more intervened, and prevented him from accompanying us by laying him up by the heels with a severe attack of cold. Now, on the other hand, it had really seemed that year as though I could not go wrong, at all events as regards fishing ; whenever I had selected a day, however long beforehand, it was "a right 'un," and the incidents which form the subject of this article have at length compelled me to come to the conclusion that my friend is correct in what he says.

To commence, as the children say, at the beginning, I had no intention of going grayling fishing that particular week. In the first place, the condition of water and weather were against it, and in the second my "Cara Sposa" had informed me that she had invited some friends on Friday for a musical evening ; and as she had previously ascertained that neither dinners, lectures, or smoking concerts demanded my absence from home, what could I do but express my intense delight ?

On Wednesday evening, however, a friend called in, and asked if I could accompany him on the following night for a couple of days with the grayling. I gave a guarded answer, viz., that I should send him

word later ; and when I reached home I explained the whole facts of the case, and laid great emphasis upon the disappointment that my friend would feel if I could not accompany him. Lucky hit number one. My wife quite agreed with my sentiments, as any reasonable wife of an angler should, and by nine o'clock p.m. I was able to send a note to say that I would go next morning. However, my friend arrived on the scene, and from the doleful shake of his head, with which he greeted me, I at once saw that something had gone wrong ; an important engagement had turned up that could not be shirked, and with an indefinite promise to come on Saturday, if possible, I was obliged to be content ; but as conveyance and beds had been engaged, I decided to go by myself.

About four o'clock on Thursday afternoon matters looked anything but hopeful. A drizzling rain began to fall, and by six, at which time I was to set out on my journey, it had increased to a steady downpour, and as I had a seven miles' drive, after a certain railway station was reached, my daughters expressed the opinion that no one but a lunatic would ever dream of going ; but "hope which springs eternal in the angler's breast" buoyed me up, and I started. Lucky hit number two. When I stepped out on the railway platform, at the end of the first stage of my journey, I found in place of the rain and fog that I had left behind me, a deep blue sky, bright with stars, a hard frost, and the ground dry and like iron. Words could

not express my delight, for if only this state of things lasted overnight, my success on the morrow was assured. The drive through the sharp frosty air was a delightful one, and we were at the journey's end almost before we were aware of the fact. A glass of something hot, a chat with the keeper, who awaited my arrival, one or two pipes, and then to bed. I think I never beheld such a lovely scene as greeted my eyes as I drew up my blind on the following morning. The sky was azure blue, not a cloud visible anywhere, the lofty hills, their summits white with snow, their base clothed with dark fir trees, which stood out in fine relief against the mantle of white behind. It was such a day that makes one feel that it is a luxury to be alive. I was not very long in despatching a hearty breakfast, and having donned my wading stockings, set out for the scene of action. The river I found just the right height and colour, and very soon my rod was together and I got to work. The proverbial fickleness of grayling was now apparent, not a bite I obtained, and the first two streams resulted in the blankest of blanks. Then I hooked a fish, which escaped just when I had made sure of him. This was comforting with a vengeance ; but I knew from experience that the time would come, so fished on perseveringly until at last a three-quarter pound grayling was landed. Another hour passed, and then another about the same size joined his comrade, after which I walked briskly down to the end of a fir plantation

where the keeper had agreed to meet me at eleven o'clock with a can of hot mulled ale, and then the sport commenced. I waded into a stream that glided gently along into rough water, and out of a length not exceeding fifty yards I extracted nine good fish, the largest weighing 1 lb. 3 oz.; I lost three or four besides. From that time until there was no longer light enough to see my small float, I never had a dull moment. "Must have been cold work," do you say? Not a bit of it—never felt warmer in my life. It was you, my friend and disbeliever, sitting close to the fire, that felt the cold, not the man in the water. The chief difficulty that I experienced was the freezing of my line in the rings. Every now and then I had to clear them from ice, and my landing net was like a bucket, scooping water with the fish. The glorious weather lasted out also until the sun dipped behind the western hills, shedding a warmer glow over their snow-capped summits. When I reeled up my line, because I could no longer see, the wooden creel was full, and the keeper's pockets also called into requisition. We had then a walk of three miles before us, but that we soon compassed. The spoil was turned out on the inn table, and the number proclaimed to be twenty-eight grayling, weighing an excellent average of $23\frac{1}{2}$ lb. It is an old saying that "history repeats itself," but, curiously enough, on November the 27th, two years previous, I killed twenty-nine fish, weighing exactly the same average, and on the same

water. The result of this splendid day's sport also proves another of my maxims, viz. : That the only way to make a good basket is to begin with a determination to accomplish your object, and to stick closely to it while you do. Had I become disgusted with my ill-luck in the early part of the day, I should probably have given up, gone home, and so missed my opportunity.

Great were my expectations for next day. At ten o'clock it was freezing harder than ever, but the landlord, who is a really good weather prophet, rather damped my feelings by saying, "He none liked the look of it." And right he proved. Never was I so much astonished in my life to hear the splash of rain-drops in the early morning ; but when I arose, though fine again, and apparently freezing, I saw my chance of another big day had gone. Fog and mist held sway where yesterday's blue sky, bright sunshine, and keen frost had been dominant ; but I was not going to be daunted, and forth I sallied, clad in mackintosh and waders—another example of the peculiarities of grayling. On this unfavourable day they commenced to take well as soon as I started, but they came short, and three were lost in rapid succession before one was landed. Then the rain began again, not soft, warm rain, like that of April or May, but a sharp icy shower driven by wind, making your face and ears tingle again. Once I halted and partly wavered : "Was the game worth the candle?" But no ; I had come to

catch fish, and fish I would have. Here and there I kept picking them up or losing them until at three o'clock I had basketed ten, and then flesh and blood could stand it no longer; like unto the proverbial "drowned rat," I wound up my line, disjoined my rod, and trudged the three miles that had appeared as nothing on the previous evening, wearily enough through the rain and mud. Never did I welcome a warm fire and slippers more than I did on my arrival that evening at the inn, and after a substantial dinner set off on my return journey, reaching Leeds at ten o'clock p.m. My total catch consisted of thirty-eight grayling, weighing $31\frac{1}{4}$ lbs., and with that I was as happy as a king.

AMBROSE CAWOOD.

A REMINISCENCE.

“GOOD evening, sir ; are ye having much sport ?”

It was towards the close of a soft, warm July day that the above words, spoken in a cheery voice, fell on my ear. I was wading knee deep in the stream above Pool Bridge, on the river Wharfe, and my attention being rivetted on my sport, I had not perceived the approach of the speaker. Turning round I saw a hale, hearty-looking old fellow, with a patriarchal white beard, standing on the bank. He was clad in knee breeches and a brown velveteen coat ; I saw at once it was the river watcher, and came ashore to have a word with him.

This was my first meeting with the individual who forms the subject of this reminiscence ; from that summer evening he and I were best of friends, and many hundreds of hours have I spent in his company. My two eldest little girls were particularly fond of him, and both at his cottage and on the banks of the river they used to seek his company, and he would explain to them all about the infant trout under his care. “Ambrose and his little fish” were quite

household words. The old man was very reserved to strangers, but to anyone with whom he was well acquainted he would talk with the greatest volubility about his achievements with the trout and grayling in the years gone by. My friend Mr. Pratt, of Otley, Hon. Sec. to the Angling Association at that place, employed Ambrose as watcher, and understood him, perhaps, as well as anyone, and I laughed heartily when Mr. P. told me the following episode that once occurred :—

He and Ambrose started off one dull November evening to collect trout ova in a small beck which runs into the Wharfe, near Otley. To those of my readers who are uninitiated into the mysteries of trout breeding, I may say that in order to catch the fish from which to obtain the ova, one of the party has to stand at a certain place in the stream holding the net while the other one ascends the water and beats the fish down into the net. Mr. P. made a stand where from experience he knew there would be a good supply of spawning fish, and despatched Ambrose upstream to beat the water down to him. The result was highly satisfactory, twenty-three trout being found in the net; these being duly attended to, Mr. P. proposed another trial of the same place, as there are always a certain percentage missed in the first attempt. The old fellow was in one of his funny moods that evening, and responded, “Nay, nay, I think ye hev dun enough here; we will gang higher up.” Now Mr. P. knew

there was an obstruction in the stream at the point mentioned, and endeavoured to explain this to his companion, who, however, was inexorable, and to avoid further parleying with him Mr. P. went. The first trial resulted in a blank; second one ditto. "It's nae good here," said Ambrose, as though it had been entirely against his wish that they had come; "let's gang below again." This was done, and upon their arrival on the spot where the twenty-three trouts were caught, a halt was made. This time twelve fine fish were landed, when to Mr. P.'s infinite amusement, Ambrose broke out with the words, "Nae, didn't I tell yer so."

I have had considerable experience of river watchers in my time, but I must say that with one notable exception I never found one to take so much interest in his work, and was always to be found at his post. During the abnormally hot season of 1887 the river Wharfe ran exceedingly low, and the strictest watch over the almost stranded fish became an absolute necessity. Night after night for three weeks did Ambrose pace the river's bank; in fact, the amount of work he performed during that period was almost incredible, considering that he was sixty-three years of age. Upon the night of his death, July 2nd, 1888, he sat up to watch a stream where there was a great number of trout and grayling. The river was very low, and there being no moon, the night was one favourable to poachers. The old man had com-

plained during the day of not feeling well, and his relatives tried to persuade him when evening came not to go, but they might as well have spoken to a rock. "Leave them trout and grayling to take care of themselves, nay, nay," was his only response ; and he went out to his midnight vigils for the last time, for in less than an hour after leaving his little cottage by the old ruined mill he breathed his last on the river's bank, being struck by an apoplectic seizure.

Poor old Ambrose ! No more shall I ramble with you through the daisy-dotted meadows alongside which flows that beautiful stream that both of us loved so well ; no more will you point out to me some more than usual fine specimen of the lusty trout or the shadowy gliding grayling, no more, alas ! And when the Great Watcher over us beckons us to come, may we all be as ready as I believe that you were at the time when you were stricken down ; and as I believe with all my heart and soul that true religion is best shown by the life that a man leads and the manner in which he performs his duty, then I feel sure that the verdict of the Almighty Judge will be : "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

A CHRISTMAS REVERIE.

I OFTEN wonder why, at that time of the year which is usually termed by the people in general "The Festive Season," the mind should revert so much to bygone days, but the fact remains that it is so ; and to-night, as I sit in my den, turning over the pages of my angling diary, the events of many happy days spent in the past with comrades, some of whom have gone hence never to return, and others who are scattered far and wide over the face of the earth, come like a waking dream before my eyes. It is very curious how perfectly one remembers the most trifling details connected with things that have happened twenty years ago—they seem like occurrences of yesterday—while important matters, which are of some more recent date, are almost forgotten.

The pages of my diary, in the early portions, are yellow and the ink faded, but the memory of the events noted therein is as fresh in my mind as on the day when they were written. How frequently at that time did the name of my cousin W. N. appear, and naturally so, for was he not my mentor in all things appertaining to angling, and did I not form my first

determination to be a proficient in the gentle art owing to the enthusiasm which he instilled into me? The first trout that ever I saw captured was by him, and although more than thirty years ago, the whole scene comes vividly before me. We were both of us scholars at Ripon Grammar School, which in those days was situated in St. Agnesgate, close to the river Skell. My cousin was a most enthusiastic angler, and always used to bring his rod, so that during the half-hour allowed for recreation and also after school hours he could follow his favourite sport.

One fine June afternoon, as we left the school-yard, he asked me to accompany him, and I consented, more from curiosity than anything else. How little did I think then what an important item in my future life angling would become. We were soon on the river bank—the strip of land behind the Maison Dieu Hospital, immediately below Bongate Bridge. The Skell was full just after a fresh, and the bait that my cousin decided to use was the natural minnow. He showed me, I remember exactly, how it was put on to the tackle, and then spun it close in at the edge, to let me see how it was worked against the stream. Almost at the end of the narrow spit of land some willow bushes overhang the water, and he pointed that out to me as being a likely place for a feeding fish. Gently he swung the minnow under the boughs, and drew it with short jerks towards us. It had nearly reached our feet when I saw a flash in the amber-

tinted water ; with no sign of excitement my instructor dropped his hand for a moment, and then tightened the line with a steady draw. His supple rod bent into a graceful curve, and after a minute or two of great excitement on my part, and perfect coolness on his, I witnessed the capture of a beautiful pound trout as mentioned before, the first I had ever seen. We wandered on from one stream to another, finishing up about eight o'clock in the evening with a pretty dish of eight trout in the pink of condition.

From that memorable day my cousin and I were inseparable, and on many occasions, when supposed by the head-master to be deep in the study of Virgil or Euclid, we were in reality discussing (to us) far more important questions, whether fly or minnow was likely to prove the most deadly, when we were free to rush away to our beloved river. Poor W. N. ; sad was my heart many, many years after, when we had spent hundreds of happy days in pursuit of trout and grayling, he shook my hand for the last time, departing to Australia, to accept a remunerative situation in a bank there. I never saw him again, as he was fatally injured in a football match, and, after lingering for several weeks, he died far away from his friends and relatives. Call it foolish sentimentality if you like, but as I sit thinking over those early days in my angling career the tears will come, and I fancy that once again I can see the handsome face and hear the cheery voice of my dear friend, who, let us hope, is

now in that unknown land where all is peace and rest.

Then, there was old Dick Smith, a veteran angler upon whom we youthful Waltonians were wont to look with a feeling akin to awe. He very seldom fished with anything but the artificial fly, and was certainly at that time about as good a fisherman as ever threw line upon Skell or Yore. Many and many a time have I stayed away from school—or, I suppose, better say at once, played truant—in order to spend the day with him, watching his movements and admiring the skill with which he added fish after fish to his basket ; then at the close of the day I would accompany him to his cottage to receive my first lessons in fly-tying. He seldom used a winged fly, all his favourite patterns being hackled ones. I should say that a dozen varieties would be as many as he would employ throughout the entire season. His special favourites were Woodcock and Orange, Waterhen Bloa, Snipe Bloa, Dark Snipe and Purple, Dotterel and Yellow, Yellow-legged Bloa, and a series of partridge hackles with various-coloured bodies. Since then I have tested the above on many rivers, and am convinced that his experience was correct, for, varied in size, I never knew them fail. It is many years since Dick Smith joined the majority, but I never shall forget his memory or his teachings.

I turn over a few more pages, and come across the names of two other famous anglers, who always were

to be found together on fishing excursions—W. Dibb and John Bellerby. The mention of them immediately brings to my mind the recollection of a day at Tanfield, the only occasion when I ever knew the Oak Fly, or Down-looker, as it is generally called, to be of any service on the Yore. A friend and myself were fishing above the village, and the other two above-named worthies were on the length below the weir. We had experienced a very disappointing day, and were having our tea in the little parlour at the Bruce Arms, when in came Mr. Dibb and “Old John,” as Bellerby was familiarly called. To our great astonishment, each had a splendid basket of trout, and on inquiring what fly had produced such sport, we were told the Down-looker. “Whatever made you try that, John?” I asked, knowing it was not a usual killer on that water. “Nay,” he replied, “I hardly know, but we had tried about every fly in our books, so thought we would give ’em summat out of common,” and “They did take it right,” he added. That was in the days when there was no railway to Tanfield and Masham, and many times have I walked from Ripon, fished all day, and tramped back again after nine o’clock in the evening with my pannier full to the lid. *Tempora mutantur*, my friends, since then.

Another well-known Ripon angler was Lowther, an umbrella-maker and cutler. He made for me the rod that I almost always use, and which, although, if I recollect rightly, only cost me three half-crowns, I

would not exchange for the best five-guinea split cane rod that was ever built. Lowther was a good all-round man ; he seldom fished the fly ; he was a great adept at swimming the worm, and I fancy I can see him now, fishing his favourite bit of water just below the point where the Skell flows into the Yore. He left Ripon during the time that I resided there, and I often wonder if he is still in the land of the living.

And so could I continue *ad infinitum* ; in fact, a goodly-sized volume could be filled with the history of my angling experiences. These memories constitute to a great extent the charm of our beloved sport. The traducers of angling cannot understand how it is when a couple of fishermen come together that they can find subject matter for hours of earnest conversation, or how so much interest can be evoked from the turning over the leaves of an old fly-book ; but everything in that weather-beaten looking volume reminds one of some incident or another. The mere sight of a ragged fly or a tarnished artificial bait brings to your mind the struggle that you had many years ago with some exceedingly heavy fish. If the pleasures of angling began and ended with the capture of fish, there would be a termination of the sport to-morrow. If a man is what I term a born angler, namely, never grows weary or impatient whether sport be good or bad, ignores discomforts of the weather, and is willing to put up with an inconvenience to insure a day's fishing, I say that man is also a lover of Nature ; to

him the riverside is a book, and in every yard of ground that he travels over there is something to attract his attention and excite him. But my reverie is at an end, for I hear the patter of little feet, and my room door is thrown open by a little fairy with dancing eyes and flushed cheeks, who begs of me to come and inspect the Christmas tree that mother and sisters are decorating upstairs. There is no denying her, and my pen must be laid aside.

A NOVEMBER DAY ON THE TEST.

THE historical "Fifth" is generally associated in one's mind with bonfires, crackers, squibs, and (in Yorkshire) ginger-bread, but I shall always remember it as the anniversary of the most remarkable day's grayling fishing I ever experienced, or am ever likely to do.

I had read and heard so much concerning the monster trout and grayling that inhabit the Hampshire Test, that it did not take long to make up my mind, when, one morning in October last year, I received an invitation from friend H., who is a member of the famous Houghton Club, to spend a few days at Stockbridge with him, and have a try at the grayling. Preliminaries were soon arranged, and on the afternoon of the 4th, H. and I left Waterloo *en route* for the scene of action. "Redspinner" was to have accompanied us, but was prevented at the last moment. He, however, saw us off at the station, and wished us the best of sport in his usual cheery style. It is about two hours' run to Stockbridge, but the time passed quickly enough in fishing talk, for when two enthusiasts get together it is quite astonishing how many points of interest crop up.

"Ah! here we are at last," suddenly exclaimed my companion, "and 'South West' to meet us," he continued. The next moment I was introduced to the last-named, who is the hon. sec. of the club, and whose *nom de plume* is familiar to all readers of the *Field*. From the station to the Vine, a real comfortable old-fashioned hostelry, is but a stone's throw, so that within a quarter of an hour the three of us were ensconced in a cosy room and doing justice to an excellently cooked repast. The remainder of the evening was spent in reminiscences of past angling exploits, tales of the Indian Mutiny (through the whole of which campaign "South West" served his country), and lastly, we discussed our plans for the morrow.

"The grayling have not done much at fly lately," "South West" remarked, "but I think if you try a worm in the bottom hatch hole you will land a good one or two."

Finally it was arranged that H. and I should drive down to the Mill, and our friend come by train to Horsbridge and meet us there; after that was settled, one more cigar, and we retired.

With such prospects before me, needless to say, I required no knocking up in the morning, in fact I was awake long before it was light. The day broke sharp and frosty, a typical grayling day, so that both of us were in excellent form for our breakfast, and by nine o'clock a start was effected. Stockbridge consists of one long wide street. During the race week, and the

coursing meeting later on, it is full to overflowing with aristocratic visitors, but to-day it presents anything but an animated appearance as we bowl along the level road and cross the river at the end of the street. This being my first view of the Test, I stand up in the trap to admire a lovely gravelly shallow below the bridge. The water was clear as crystal, It was a lovely drive through the country lane leading to the Mill, a distance of two and a half miles ; very different this to our Yorkshire scenery, but none the less beautiful. The glory of the autumn tints had not yet departed from the foliage, and the hedge-rows are brightened with the scarlet berries of the nightshade, and the darker tinted hips and haws. Trim white-walled villas are dotted here and there, the verandas of some of them a blaze of virginian creeper, while a few late roses are still to be seen.

“That is the Machine Barn,” quoth H., as we pass a long thatched building on our left. “Beyond that meadow is the shallow named after it, which Francis Francis used to mention so often in his articles.” I take stock accordingly. Next came the picturesque little village of Houghton, with that noted anglers’ rest, the Boot Inn ; then we wheel round the corner and I see Houghton Mill for the first time. Dismounting, we stand on the bridge peering into the crystal depths, but no shadowy forms of trout or grayling are visible, no dimple of rising fish—there might not have been one in the river.

Calling a lad who was standing in the mill yard, we asked him if he could get us a few gilt tails, and in a very short time he returned with a score or two in an old lobster tin.

"I should strongly advise you, master, to use something stouter than this," quietly remarked H., critically examining my fine drawn gut cast, "for if you hook a good fish he will break you to a certainty." But I had landed two-pounders on the Costa with the same tackle, and expressed my doubt on the subject. The water was running through two of the hatches, and H. interviewed the miller, who kindly shut down one of them, and regulated the other until the stream running through the pool was to our liking. Then, adjusting my wee red topped float to the required depth, so far as I could judge, I took my first swim on a Hampshire chalk stream. At the third attempt down went the float, and I felt that something heavy was hooked. Twenty yards of line was taken in the first rush, and then down the fish went to the bottom and stuck there. Ten minutes of grand sport ensued, when H. cleverly netted him—a grand trout between two and three pounds. Carefully was he unhooked and returned to the water above the hatch so that he might not inform his friends and relatives of his temporary sojourn on dry land. Half an hour passed, but nothing else could we touch, so accordingly crossed the hatch and took our stand on the opposite bank. Then the fun began. The first swim down I was into

a good grayling. That I could tell at once, by the style of his play. Duly netted, he proved to be 1 lb. 11 oz., and within an hour four even larger ones were laid beside him on the grass. H. left two visible and hid the rest just as "South West" appeared in sight.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, on observing the brace of fish, "I am glad you have done something; you may consider yourself fortunate to have done so well in so short a time."

"And how about these, old man?" said H., uncovering the other three.

I do not intend to weary my readers by detailing the whole of the sport of that memorable November day; suffice to say that from that one pool were landed twelve grayling weighing 22 lb. 1 oz.; the smallest was 1 lb. 8 oz., the largest 2 lb. 6 oz. My two companions never wet a line, in fact never put their rods together. In a most unselfish spirit they attended to my wants the whole day. In addition to the above, I landed eight lovely trout varying from two to three pounds in weight, and was broken three times. With such extremely fine tackle it was utterly impossible to expect to land every fish without disaster. At five o'clock the trap arrived, and as it was getting too dark to see any longer, we struck work and spent another enjoyable evening in the cosy inn parlour. In the morning came two telegrams, one from "Redspinner" saying he was unable to run down and join us, as he had intended, the other from M.—prince of dry fly fishers

—to intimate that he was coming to spend the day in our company. There was a little sunshine to greet us as we wandered leisurely upstream on the morning of the second day, for I wished to give the fly a chance and let the hatch hole have a rest. Several good fish, both trout and grayling, were showing up about the Sheep Bridge, which has so often been depicted with both pen and pencil. It was on the shallow below it that Francis Francis, angler and author, as “Red-spinner” has gracefully termed him, achieved so many triumphs, and it was on the old bridge itself, one hazy September day, when, in company with H. and M., he reeled up his line for the last time and remarked pathetically, “I shall fish no more, no more!” A little above the bridge is the fishing hut, the crystal stream laving its very steps, and therein may be found the archives of the club in the shape of a ponderous tome containing the details of many a happy day’s sport. M. soon joined us, and then, for the first time, I saw an angler who could do anything he liked with a rod and line. I have met many men in my time, but I can truthfully say never one with half the sweet disposition, or true sportsmanlike feelings, possessed by him. To know him is a pleasure, and if for nothing else, I am thankful that providence made me a born angler, so that I have within the past thirty years made the acquaintance of him and others whom to know is a privilege. It was only by the intercession of H. that I was allowed to witness his marvellous

"steeple cast," by which he can keep twenty yards of line towering like a corkscrew in the air, and then shoot a midge-fly across the stream, when it floats like a thing of life. Then he performed the same feat left-handed ; then threw the fly behind his back ; and then under his leg, in each case the fly floating perfectly. This was worth going from Yorkshire to Hampshire to see, without anything else. Of our fishing on the second day, the less said the better. M. would not fish, I couldn't, and H. landed two goodly grayling, 1 lb. 10 oz. and 2 lb. 3 oz. respectively. Then a rustic tea in the clean little inn at Horsbridge, and home by rail ; another memorable evening and then the last day.

It is not often in a long life that an angler sees the capture of two grayling weighing 6 lb. 9 oz., but on the 7th of November, 1891, such was the case, and these briefly are the details.

On arriving at the Mill Pool the next morning, H. remarked : "Just have one more try with the worm, and then we will go upstream and fish fly."

Taking my stand on the spot where I had such grand sport on the "fifth," I hooked something heavy at the third swim. H., standing on the weir beam, saw the fish turn over, and when I expressed my opinion that he was something larger than anything I had yet seen he nonchalantly remarked, "About 2 lb., I think." I thought differently, for I could literally do nothing with him. For fully ten minutes

he kept the float quite out of sight, and then a roll over on the top revealed his splendid proportions.

"Now, then," I exclaimed triumphantly, "Did you see that?"

"No use attempting to deceive you any longer," said my companion. "I saw when you hooked him what he was, but did not wish to unnerve you. He is the biggest grayling I have ever seen; now do take care."

Twenty minutes passed, and the end of the struggle was apparently as far off as ever. I was afraid that the fragile tackle would become chafed and give way, so we had to resort to strategy: H. lay down on the wall below the weir and sank the net deep in the water, gradually I led the fish towards the spot, and just as he was about to start off on another voyage of discovery he was lifted out and deposited on the bank. What I did I cannot say. I believe I nearly embraced H., and then came the question—"What does he weigh?" The balance proclaimed him 3 lb. 9 oz.—the largest grayling ever landed on that water. Now for the capture of the three-pounder! After the episode described above we sat on the weir beam smoking for fully half an hour. Then we proceeded upstream to a spot called the Boot Island. Just above was a beautiful gravelly shallow, and on it we could see three or four large fish leisurely sucking down every insect that the eddy above floated down to them. H. wanted me to try for one of them, but I simply laughed at

the idea, and at last I prevailed on him to mount a "gold-ribbed hare's ear," and float it over them, which he did to perfection. The result was most tantalizing. The fish were not put down, but continued taking the naturals just as before—the artificial they would have none of. After, perhaps, twenty casts, H. got a little bit disgusted, but I prevailed on him to have just one more throw. Up came the biggest fish of the lot, as though the fly was quite a novelty. The next moment H. was rushing downstream like an express train, and I after him with the net. Over two hedges and a stile we tumbled and then, just as the fish was going under a foot bridge, I netted him, a handsome grayling of 3 lb. weight.

Alas! no more shall I tread the banks of that glorious stream, for on the first of January, 1893, the Houghton Club ceased to exist, the whole length having been purchased by the Stockbridge Club. The two visits that I have paid to that district will, however, always remain a green spot in my memory, and if I live beyond the age allotted to the life of man, I shall always remember the hatch hole at Houghton Mill, "Boot Island," and that memorable November day.

CHRISTMASTIDE AMONG THE GRAYLING.

THERE are a great many anglers who are exceedingly keen after sport so long as the banks of their favourite rivers are clothed in the tender green tints of early spring, or in the correspondingly picturesque foliage of summer and autumn, but as soon as chill November sets in and the first white mantle of snow heralds the approach of winter, then the rod is laid aside and not taken in hand again until the swallows are twittering once more among the eaves.

Now, to my mind, the country is quite as beautiful in its winter's garb as it is in the verdant spring or sultry summer. Of course, its beauties are of a different kind—the green leaves, mosses, and ferns are gone, so are the many-hued wild flowers, and the birds which sang to you as you plied your art in search of the keen-eyed trout ; but in their place you can admire the surface of the pure white snow, sparkling like diamonds—very different to the black slush found in the streets of our large towns—the sparkling icicles depending from boughs of trees or overhanging

rocks ; and as you walk briskly down to the stream beyond the spinney, you stop involuntarily to admire the beautiful feathery effect produced by the hoar frost upon the delicate tracery of the twigs.

Christmas had come round once more, and for a fortnight previous hard frosts had prevailed ; the various rivers in Yorkshire had just got into the condition so dear to the heart of the ardent winter fisherman, and the skating fraternity were experiencing what our Transatlantic cousins term "a good time."

It has been my invariable custom for very many years to have a real, good, solid, six days' campaign with the grayling during the week following Christmas, and as the time drew nigh, and the frost showed no signs of giving, I hugged myself with delight at the prospect of a more than usually good week's sport, more especially as I had in hand three permits for fishing three different lengths on the Yore and Wharfe, where I knew from experience there was ample store of *Salmo thymallus*.

I had occupied all my spare time during the week preceding Christmas in preparing plenty of spare tackle, as it is a matter of considerable difficulty to wrap hooks on to gut at the river's side, with the thermometer at freezing point, or even below ; there was also a good stock of small red worms to have in readiness, and my readers can imagine that, with the ground like iron, it is not the easiest matter in the

world to procure these necessary adjuncts. But at last everything was in readiness, and I settled myself down to spend Christmas Day and the one following in assisting at the consumption of "cakes and ale," "Scotch," and the fragrant weed. Everything must have an end, Christmas festivities being no exception.

Monday morning arrived at last, and at 8-25 a.m. I took train at Pool to have a day with my good friend "Watchet," on the Wharfe, some seven miles higher up the valley. When I arrived at his house I found him at breakfast, and although I had partaken of a good square meal before leaving home, he insisted, in his hearty way, upon my joining him. I accepted a cup of tea just to bear him company, and in less than half an hour we had donned our waders and were on our way to the river.

"Just right height and colour," I remarked to my companion, as we put our rods together. "Which side of the water will you take?"

"Watchet" elected to fish the right-hand bank, looking up the river, and I commenced work at the tail end of a long rough stream, which gradually ran down into an eddying pool about four feet in depth. I had not made a dozen swims when the little float gave warning, and I was busy playing a 6 oz. trout, in fair condition for the time of year. I had not bargained for this class of sport, however, and threw him in a few yards above me. The next fish was also a trout, and I was beginning to get impatient,

when there was an unmistakable grayling bite, and the next moment my rod was bending under the weight of a $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. fish, whose silvery sides and milk-white belly showed plainly, deep down in the crystal water, as he darted to and fro in his vain efforts to escape. "Your very good health, number one," I remarked, as I basketed him eventually, and suiting the action to the word I took a small taste of Glenlivet from my flask. (MEM.—Always drink to the health of your first fish.) Five good grayling were reposing in my basket before I left that first stream, which is a long one, requiring about half an hour to fish it properly. This was not a bad start, and after crossing the river I fished the next stream above from the opposite side. This drew blank, although I fished it down twice most carefully, and not caring to waste more time there I proceeded onwards.

I will not weary my readers with relating all the details of that day's sport, but let it suffice to say, that at three o'clock I had twenty grayling, weighing exactly $9\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. I could easily have killed more, had I continued fishing until dusk ; but I found my wading stockings were leaking, and not caring to risk an attack of rheumatic fever for the sake of a few more grayling, I reeled up, well satisfied with my first day's sport.

"Watchett" had not quite such a successful day, but the reason was apparent, he having only fished the shallower water, owing to a fear of contracting an

attack of rheumatism if he waded the deep portion of the streams, which was the place where I killed the greater part of my fish. It would occupy too much space were I to describe the entire six days' proceedings, and I will therefore content myself by giving a summary of them, but as the Friday and Saturday were memorable days I will attempt to describe the events which took place on them.

One of the three tickets of permission to fish, to which I have alluded previously, had been given to me by a gentleman, who is, perhaps, the best clear water minnow fisher I have ever known; he had never seen anyone swim the worm for grayling, and he asked me to let him know upon what day I would come to fish his water, and, if possible, he would come down and watch me for a short time. I chose the Friday, and commenced fishing about 9-30 a.m. At the start I could not stir a fish anywhere, and must have been fishing for at least an hour, when I came to a perfect looking stream, where after a few swims I was fast in a half pounder, which I was just landing when I caught sight of Mr. M. coming along the bank. After walking forward to meet him, and having a little conversation, I resumed my fishing, he watching my operations. For the next half hour there was very little doing, beyond picking up a stray fish here and there; but about 11 o'clock sport began to improve, and by the time that my friend left me (about 2 p.m.) I had some 9 lb. of grayling in my creel.

At the time named I was engaged in fishing the tail end of a long rough stream, and he bid me good day, giving me a parting word of warning about the uneven nature of the bottom. "It wouldn't be very pleasant to get a ducking a day like this," he said, "and I have had many a narrow escape when trout fishing."

"All right," I replied, "I'll take care." Mr. M. then wished me good luck and walked rapidly away in the direction of Ilkley, leaving me to resume my fishing.

All went well for the next twenty minutes, during which time other two grayling had joined their companions in my creel, and I began to think that it was going to prove a real red-letter day; but all at once, in keeping my eye fixed upon my small float out in the stream, I stumbled over a large piece of rock and fell forwards. This caused my wooden creel, containing over 9 lb. of grayling, to sling round my neck, and before I could say "Jack Robinson" I was floundering about in four feet of water.

If any of my readers have ever had the misfortune to be immersed, when venturing "not wisely but too well" upon a dangerous piece of ice during the winter months, they will be able to form some idea how I eventually regained *terra firma*. The thermometer had been below freezing point all day, and as I leaned for temporary support against the frozen bank of the river I felt completely paralysed.

If anyone had offered me fifty pounds I could not have walked a yard at that moment. The late Mr. Francis Francis, in one of his articles, recounts how he once, when shooting snipe in Cornwall, stuck fast in a bog, from which awkward position he had great difficulty in extricating himself; he graphically described the fear that came over him, and I must confess a very similar feeling crept over me when I realised my position. Very fortunately I had in my pocket a flask containing about half a pint of brandy, I had only had a sip or two, the greater portion remaining, and this I immediately swallowed. It soon began to restore the circulation of my blood, and in three or four minutes I was able to climb up the bank into the field. The first thing that I did was to empty my wading stockings, and the next to make tracks for Ilkley as hard as ever I could go. Half an hour saw me within the hospitable doors of the Crescent Hotel, where I was able to divest myself of my half-frozen clothes, rub myself thoroughly with warm rough towels, and don a borrowed suit, which, to use a common Yorkshire phrase, "fit where it touched."

For the succeeding three or four hours I sat in the smoke room, where a fairly good company were assembled, and my readers can depend upon it that I came in for a good modicum of chaff.

At length the landlady announced that my clothes were perfectly dry, and then only did it begin to

dawn upon me that when I reached home my troubles would not be at an end, for it was extremely probable that upon hearing of my adventure Mrs. W. would "cut up rough," hurl all manner of invectives against my beloved sport, and wind up a half hour's dissertation upon the insanity of going fishing in winter, with a solemn declaration that "she knew very well that it would end some day in me being brought home drowned." However, this new danger had to be faced, so about 7-30 I bid my friends good-night, and some half hour later entered my domicile. "You are late, Max," remarked my wife, looking up from the book she was reading; "you said you would come by the 4-20 train, and we waited tea for you." "Yes, dear," I replied, in as careless a tone as I could assume; "but unfortunately I fell into the river, and was obliged to wait until my clothes were dried."

And then the storm burst. It is very seldom that the *cara sposa* makes any remarks adverse to angling, for we made a compact on that point many, many years ago; but on this occasion the course of events ran exactly as I had expected, and for half an hour I experienced a most joyous time. I knew that explanation would be of no avail, so I simply sat it out, smoking my pipe in front of the fire, and when the oration finished with the aforesaid prophecy relative to my demise, I arose, knocked the ashes out, quite coinciding with all she had said, and retired to bed.

The next day I had promised to spend at Tanfield, on the Yore, with my friend, G. Helliwell, and accordingly I joined him at Arthington Station to proceed to our destination by the 8-25 train. There had been a very severe frost overnight, and when we eventually landed, and were putting our rods together



TANFIELD MILL, ON THE YORE. WINTER TIME.

at the door of the inn, we both agreed that it was a long time since we had experienced such a cold morning.

Throughout the whole of the day we were continually engaged in thawing the ice which accumulated on our lines, and after using our landing nets several times the meshes were completely made up with ice,

and we were unable to use them. The fish, however, took fairly well, and when we reeled up finally at 4 o'clock, my friend had twenty-nine grayling and I had twenty. This day only varied from the previous ones in being so intensely cold, and I should not have entered into these details excepting to show what an exceedingly curious fish the grayling is in respect to its habits. I have said what was the result of our day, and have only to add that there were no large fish in either of our baskets, by which I mean nothing over 10 oz. I know that there were plenty of larger ones, and remarked to my companion that they must have been "Christmasing," and had retired into temporary seclusion in order to recover from the effects thereof.

Mark the following :—Four miles higher up the river other three anglers ; one of them a professional, who knew every inch of the water, assured me afterwards that they *never had a single fish* the whole of the day. Seven miles higher up still, another friend of mine killed twenty-three fish, none of which were under $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. What angler can explain this anomaly? And so ended my week's sport ; the following is a brief summary of it :—

DATE.	RIVER.	NO. OF FISH.	TOT. WEIGHT.
Dec. 27, 1886.	Wharfe	20	9½ lbs.
" 28 "	"	6	4¼ lbs.
" 29 "	"	10	6¾ lbs.
" 30 "	"	11	7½ lbs.
" 31 "	"	18	9½ lbs.
Jan. 1, 1887	Yore	20	8½ lbs.
		85	45½ lbs.

On December 28th and 29th the river was out of order owing to the presence of melted snow, otherwise I believe the result would have been better still. One thing is very certain, viz., that for some reason or other the grayling found in the Wharfe are, as a rule, much larger than those taken from the Yore. Is it because the feed is better? It certainly cannot be because the water is purer, because it is well known that such is not the case.

AN AUGUST HOLIDAY WITH A YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIAST.

BANK Holiday in August is now quite as popular, if not more so, than its two predecessors at Easter and Whitsuntide, the reason probably being that the weather is more settled and the country looking its very best.

This annual carnival had come round once more, and I had decided to spend it upon a preserved length of the Yore, and wishing to be ready for the fray early on Monday morning, and also to escape the miseries usually attendant upon travelling on a Bank Holiday, I went down early on Sunday morning, driving from Melmerby to Tanfield, which was to be my abiding place. In racing, cricket, or football, it is generally conceded that a good start is everything. I made a bad one by leaving a bag containing various toilet requisites under the carriage seat ; a porter was duly informed of the fact, but upon enquiring again on Tuesday it transpired that the stationmaster's dignity had been touched, because he was not referred to in the first instance, and consequently matters remained

in statu quo. The sense of importance of some of these country stationmasters is quite overpowering, especially if their station be exalted by the title of "Junction." However the bag turned up a week later.

What a charming drive we had through the sweet-scented lanes, through picturesque Wath, with its fine old church and rustic vicarage, on past fields of wheat, barley, and oats, ripening rapidly under the influence of the August sun; now again almost shut in by emerald foliage or by hedges bright with the pale pink blossoms of the wild rose, and redolent of honeysuckle and meadow sweet; now we get a view of the sparkling river, as it tumbles over the moss-covered boulders, past Tanfield Mill, the former home of John Jackson, the author of the "Practical Fly Fisher"; round the corner, and we pull up at the door of that anglers' home, the Bruce Arms. "Now, gentlemen, you will be ready for something to eat, I expect," were the comforting words with which the worthy hostess, Mrs. Kendall, greeted us, and an appetising odour of fried home-fed ham certainly did cause us to think that a little breakfast would not prove unacceptable.

An hour later and I was on the familiar old stone bridge examining the state of the river with a critical eye—dead low, and as clear as crystal; here and there a rising grayling made the faintest dimple on the surface, while a sharp plop announced the presence of a trout; a couple of patriarchal chub were cruising

about the buttress of the bridge, picking up anything in the way of provender that was brought down to them by the current. I was so intent upon my observations that I did not see anyone approach me, and was consequently somewhat startled by being accosted



HACKFALL, ON THE YORE. SUMMER TIME.

by a youth of some twelve or thirteen summers, who remarked that the fish were rising well. "They are, but that is generally the case on Sundays, when one cannot fish," I replied.

"I saw the fog black on the water yesterday," my young friend continued ; "is it not rather early?" Now, if there is one thing I admire more than another, it is for youths to take a real interest in angling matters during the early portion of their lives ; this one was evidently one of the "right sort," so I wheeled round and leisurely surveyed him. He was a bright intelligent-looking lad of medium height, with fearless eyes and a winning smile ; then I recognised him, and exclaimed, "Why, Julian, what brings you here?" He explained that he and his mother were spending a short holiday in the village. Before we parted he had arranged to accompany me on my angling ramble on the morrow. I had quite decided in my own mind that fly fishing would be next to useless, so there were three courses open to me—the first to dib with natural fly behind the bushes ; the second to fish the natural minnow upstream on the finest of tackle ; and, the third to have recourse to clear water worm fishing. The latter was the one I decided to pursue, and at four o'clock on the Monday morning I was walking briskly down the lane leading to the lower part of the Tanfield club's water. The air was beautifully fresh and clear, but there was an awkward chopping wind that I did not at all like, and which I felt sure would impede my operations. Nor was I mistaken. At the very first cast I saw at once that angling that day would be anything but a bed of roses. I should here state that I told my young

friend that he had better not rise too early, but meet me at the Bruce Arms about nine o'clock. I killed four nice fish before breakfast time, and then went in, finding Julian waiting for me in the bar. A hearty meal and then a start. There were four of us—a friend from Scarborough, another from Leeds, and Julian, who was almost too excited to wait until we reached the starting place. We arrived there at last, and found that the wind had increased almost to a gale, so that to throw three yards of gossamer gut with only the weight of a worm at the end was a work of considerable labour. Moreover, the fish were in anything but an accommodating humour, and in many good streams, which I knew from experience contained any amount of fish, I never saw the ghost of one. At last I came to a long gravelly length with a strongish stream running down the centre and a nice shallow on each side. Wading cautiously up the middle I threw on each side of me, and in a very short space of time I had killed four nice fish, besides losing several others. After this I kept getting one here and there, until I finished up at five o'clock with fourteen nice-sized trout, none of them, however, being over half a pound. My little enthusiast was delighted; he had never seen trout killed in that way before, and his questions why I did this, or why I did the other were overwhelming. Finally I told him that I was going to have another day's fishing on the morrow, and that if he liked he could accompany me. My Scarborough

friend returned home that evening, and my Leeds friend had arranged a perch fishing expedition on the morrow, so young Julian and I started off on the Tuesday morning at 9-30 a.m.

I had been out fishing alone for an hour or two previously, and had killed four trout. We had intended to fish upstream, but hearing that several anglers were ahead of us, we wended our way to the ground we had traversed on the previous day. The condition of affairs was, however, very different ; the air was perfectly still, and accurate casting was now possible. In the very first stream I entered I ran two fish, and got one. This was a capital start, and put me on good terms with myself. My youthful *Fidus Achates* was in a most observant frame of mind ; now it was a rising fish to which he drew my attention, then a water rat trimming his whiskers under the overhanging bough of a hawthorn tree ; next a water ouzel attracted his notice, and he entered into a learned dissertation on the habits of that bird, expressing his opinion that it played great havoc among the fry of trout and grayling. After that he examined the flies upon the water, and, bringing them to me, asked their names. I was perfectly delighted with my young companion ; in him I saw the making of a real born angler, one to whom a day's fishing can never be too long, and who cares but little what the weather may be so long as he is catching fish. During the whole day he only wandered once from my side, and then it

was only to make a raid, boy like, upon an adjacent turnip field, which he informed me confidentially later on contained "some real champions." Once I lost him altogether. I was in the river, and looked all round somewhat anxiously ; suddenly I espied a hand waving from a bush ; he had crept carefully round the bank and got into the midst of the same, in order to better watch my movements, without disturbing the fish. At last the sun sank westwards, and our day's sport came to an end. On a grassy bank the lad turned out the contents of my creel, sententiously remarking that he would put the small fish at the bottom and the large ones at the top. This suggestion I thought was eminently characteristic of the angler bred and born. A three miles walk and we are at home once more, for is not the Bruce Arms as good as such to me. For more than twenty-five years have I been accustomed to abide there, and now I almost seem to be part and parcel of the household.

The second day proved even better than the first, as my take numbered fourteen trout and three grayling, weighing altogether $6\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Of course, as in the case of the organ blower, Julian was very triumphant, and talked fluently of "the sport we had," and how "such a trout nearly got away from us." Happy lad ! I wish my angling career was commencing again, as yours is, and that the past thirty years were to me a prospect instead of a retrospect ; but that cannot be, and, instead of wishing an impossibility, I

will express a hope that your future may be as bright as a summer's day, and that you may in the fulness of time become an angler of which the good old county of Yorkshire may be proud.

A NOVEMBER DAY ON THE YORE.

[T was a cold damp evening, about the middle of November, when I reached the little station at Hawes, in North Yorkshire, having journeyed thither from Leeds with the intention of having a turn at the grayling on the following day. For a fortnight previous the weather had been simply perfect—sharp frosty nights, succeeded by bright clear days, and the rivers exactly the right height ; but about three days before the one that I had fixed upon the frost came to an end, rain fell incessantly for twenty-four hours, and I knew that a flood was a certainty ; still there was an intervening day to give the river a chance of running down, and as that day was fine I determined to risk it, and accordingly set off on my journey.

“A nasty night, sir,” spoke a cheerful voice at my elbow, as I stood upon the platform lighting my pipe, before making my way up to the village. I turned and saw Blades, the professional angler, who, hearing at the inn that I was expected, had come down to assist me with my luggage.

“It is, Jimmy,” I replied ; “how is the river?”
“Just right, sir. I have been out all to-day, and killed

thirteen beauties with the maggot ; when I left off at four o'clock it was settling fast, and I think that to-morrow you will have a real good day."

This intelligence aroused my drooping spirits ; a cosy room, blazing fire, and substantial Yorkshire tea, contributed still further towards doing so ; and when, after partaking of the latter, the company was augmented by the arrival of several other ardent anglers, the fun waxed fast and furious, while the piscatorial narratives that were related would certainly have held their own if pitted against those told by the " Ettrick Shepherd " and his boon companions in the memorable " *Noctes Ambrosianæ* ."

Closing time, however, came at last, and an intimation of that fact from the landlord abruptly terminated a narrative which was being related by Matthew W——, and which bid fair to eclipse any of its predecessors. I went outside with them to inspect the weather, and, greatly to my delight, found that the mist had cleared away and the stars were shining brightly.

" Now remember, Blades, not a moment later than eight o'clock to-morrow morning," I said, as he prepared to depart, " and don't forget the worms."

" All right, sir ; no fear," was his reply, as he walked briskly up the street.

The next day was fine, and as my companion and I walked down the fields behind the hotel on our way to the river we could see that it was just about the

right level. We had decided to commence in a stream just above the village, and then take them alternately down the river. I was not long in adjusting my rod and tackle, and we then arranged that I should try the worm, and my companion the maggot.

I should here state that I was wading and Blades was not. About the third swim down my float moved slightly sideways, and I struck sharply, but with no result.

Mr. Corry, an angler from Hardrow, was watching me from that side of the river, and asked if it was a bite? "I think so," I replied, "but we shall soon see."

Once more the tiny, red-tipped float approached the spot, and again gave a slight indication. A gentle turn of the wrist, and a bending rod proclaimed the first capture.

A grayling faint hearted ! Who says so ? Just watch this half pounder fight for his liberty. Here, there, and everywhere he darts about in the crystal depths—now rolling over on the surface of the water, now running out line like a miniature salmon, now retiring to sulk at the bottom of the river ; but he is safely in the net at last, and I cast an admiring glance on his silvery sides, shot with purple and green tints, spotted here and there with black, before I consign him to the pannier. As I do so I hear a shout, and looking down the river I observe that Blades is busily engaged with another. I basket other two nice fish

before I leave the stream in which I commenced, whereupon Mr. Corry remarks that he shall go up home for his own rod, as they appear to be in the humour.

The next stream is a rough one running under some willows and widening out at the tail into a nice pool. From it I get another 8-oz. fish, and then I fish over some very likely water without having a touch.

Meantime Mr. Corry has arrived upon the scene and commenced operations, and Blades had basketed one more with the maggot. I do nothing further down to the stone bridge which spans the river, and, as my companions have located themselves in the stream below it, I cross the road, get over the stone fence at the other side, and make my way over a field to a stream which is a particular favourite of mine. At the head it is somewhat shallow, but it gradually deepens over a bar of golden gravel, terminating in a swirly hole, which is the abiding place of many a goodly grayling.

Wading gently in for a short distance, I carefully throw my bait into the edge of the stream, which soon shoulders it into the eddy ; down goes the float, and, upon striking, I find that I have hooked a tidy fish. I play him carefully, so as not to disturb the rest of the water, and am leading him up to the net, when the hold suddenly gives, and *Salmo thymallus* retires *liber et exultans*. I make a forcible remark, and rebait. I lose other two fish and basket another

before I leave that stream, and then cross the river, so that I may fish from the shore—a roughish, narrow stream, about eighteen inches in depth. Here I “strike ile,” killing four nice fish in a very short time, and just as friend C. comes round the corner I hook another, which rushes under some willows and escapes. He tells me that he has not seen a fish up to now, and that Blades has done nothing further. I therefore conclude that worm will be the best bait to depend on. After this comes a long stretch of deep water, which is useless for worm fishing, except under certain conditions of the water. For fly fishing it is excellent ; but, as we see nothing stirring on the surface, we wend our way onwards to the next stream. Here Blades caught a large trout, and I killed the largest grayling I had landed so far—a trifle under 1 lb. A long interval succeeds, during which neither of us can get even a bite. C. has gone down stream for about a mile ; we therefore suspend operations for a short period and refresh the inner man, after which a pipe, and then to work again.

Just below the stone fence under which we had eaten our *al fresco* lunch ran a stream, which is a noted one for grayling. It is shallow at the side of the river at which we were standing ; but at the far side it will be two to three feet in depth, and broken up by moss-covered rocks into several beautiful eddies, in which the fish are usually to be found. The very first swim down the edge of this stream produced a

fish, and then I fished for some time with no further result, when suddenly down went the float. I struck immediately, but the only apparent result was total loss of the worm. I rebaited, took another swim, and, exactly in the same spot, the float once more disappeared. Upon striking, I found the whole of the worm had gone once more, and I did not even feel the fish. Other four times was this game enacted, and then I turned to Blades, who was watching me, and told him that we would go lower down, giving our fishy friend another chance upon our way back. We fished down the river for another mile ; but, not meeting with any success, we joined C., and we all turned back together. Upon arriving at the stream below the fence I called a halt, baited my tackle with a choice little red worm, and again tried my skill. The cunning rascal once more evaded my hook ; but the eighth worm secured him, and he proved to be a fine grayling a trifle over three-quarter pounds. How he contrived to secure the whole of the worm seven times without being hooked, or even pricked, I cannot imagine ; in fact, had I not put the hook twice through the worm upon my last essay, I do not think I should have ever have basketed him. We all of us drank to the health of that fish, whose capture gave me more satisfaction than all the rest put together.

The last hour of that November afternoon proved the best of the day, and at four o'clock I reeled up, with a basket consisting of seventeen grayling. Through

not wading, neither Blades or Mr. Corry did much; in low, bright water it is an absolute necessity. I think I can hear some reader remark, "What, wade in winter time! It is enough to starve you to death to even think of such a thing!" It is thinking about it that frightens you; in actual practice you are warmer by the riverside, so long as you keep moving about, than if you are crouching over the fire indoors. Some of my pleasantest recollections are of winter days spent by the frost-bound river, and so long as I enjoy robust health I shall always look forward to such. I have seen many a time, when my legs have got cold through standing upon the bank for some time, that I have waded into the stream to get them warm, the temperature of the water being warmer than the air. Wear warm woollen clothing and the best waterproof you can buy, and, take my word for it, you will not find winter fishing nearly such cold work as you imagine it to be.

I finished the day with a good comfortable meat tea, a "Scotch" or two, and sundry pipes; "*Fidus Achates*" Blades accompanied me to the station, and at eight o'clock p.m. I was walking down English Street, Carlisle, having business to attend to in that town during the next few days.

A CHARMING WINTER'S DAY.

I AM fully aware that to a great number of persons the above title must appear somewhat anomalous. To such, the prevailing idea of comfort during the weather we have experienced since we entered upon the present year (1895) is to sit before a blazing fire, with a newspaper or the latest novel, and revile the weather for the sake of variety. Let me gently premise that they are altogether wrong, for, if the sky is clear and the wind is not in the east, the day can be far more profitably spent, both as regards comfort and health, in a long ramble in the pure fresh air of some country retreat, and, with a view of substantiating this statement, I sit down to write this article.

There are few men of my acquaintance whom I would sooner select as a companion for such an excursion than my friend Gray. He is so buoyant in spirits, so full of enthusiasm and vitality, that you feel some twenty years younger when in his company, so that when he suggested that we should journey to Tanfield, armed, not with rods and nets, but with a camera, it did not take long for me to decide. Even in smoky Leeds, as I walked to the station, the air

felt exhilarating, and I pictured in my mind the lane leading to the old familiar bridge, the picturesque sweep of frozen river above and below, the grey old tower named after the Marmions of history, *et hoc genus*. At Arthington I looked out, and soon espied my friend, who quickly joined me, and the remainder



THE HATCHERY, TANFIELD. WINTER.

of the journey was spent chiefly in discussing the prospects of the coming trout season.

Anyone at all sceptical about the beauty of the country in the winter time ought to have been with us as we stood for a moment or two outside the Bruce Arms surveying the landscape. The sky was without

a cloud, and the sun shone brightly, but without any perceptible influence upon the pure white snow, which covered the ground—different, indeed, to the black sludge which disfigured the streets of Leeds. We inquired if Wild, the river watcher, had been seen, and upon receiving a reply in the negative from the landlord of the Bruce, we decided to walk up to his cottage, and then inspect the ova at the hatchery and the yearling trout in the rearing pond. We found him at home, and knowing that if we were to accomplish the task we had mapped out, viz., to walk up to the top end of Hackfall, no time must be lost, we immediately started for the hatchery. Here we found the ova recently obtained from the Howietoun Fishery fully hatched out, and for some time watched the tiny fish swimming to and fro with the sac still attached. After that we proceeded to the rearing pond, and it was indeed an interesting sight to see the trout commence to come to the surface as soon as the door was opened. Wild feeds them twice a day with a special food, which he prepares himself, and they naturally expect it. I must say that I have never seen a more splendid lot of yearling trout than those now in the pond; the water seems perfectly black with them, and there are plenty of them at least six inches in length. The introduction of these into the river, which will take place as soon as the ice clears away, should make a marked difference in the way of trout fishing. I should have stated that before we left the

bridge we took a view of the river above and a glimpse of the Marmion Tower.

No other particularly striking bit of scenery presented itself until we reached Mickley Weir, and above that point was a group of large icicles depending from a dripping rock. The camera was once more called into requisition, and a view of them taken. At this point Wild was taken with something akin to a fit of ague, which appeared to me rather a curious coincidence, as he had previously been apparently bathed in perspiration, owing to his exertions in carrying the camera and a huge box of what I believe photographers term "dry plates." Suddenly the cause of his attack dawned upon my mind—Robert Mackley's was close at hand, and when I hinted to G., in a casual kind of way, that we might as well cross on the ice and have a little refreshment, Wild's face positively beamed, and he shouldered the camera and the platebox with renewed vigour. Thus it came to pass that within a very short space of time we were all three of us comfortably ensconced in host Mackley's ingle nook, with a pint of home-brewed ale before us. And then G. was suddenly imbued with a violent desire to take a family group in front of the house, so, as nothing else would satisfy him, out we trooped—Mr. Mackley, his wife and daughter, Wild (whose indisposition had vanished as suddenly as it appeared), and your humble servant. G. was now to the fore ; he directed us how to pose ourselves

in an absolutely regal manner ; our limbs and heads were adjusted. The ladies were told to smile and put on a pleasing aspect—a matter of no small difficulty, as the sun was shining directly in our faces ; but the operator was inexorable, and when he said, in the sternest tones he could assume, “ Now, then, all ready,” and removed the cap from the lens, we all of us tried to look as cheerful as though we were going to a wedding. Since then G. has informed me that either the servant, or the cat, or himself—he is not quite certain which it is—has broken the negative of that group ; but, fortunately, not before he had struck off four impressions. These are, therefore, of historical interest, and the two forwarded to Mr. Mackley and Wild will be handed down to posterity as veritable heirlooms.

It was now mid-day, and I suggested mildly that we had better recross the frozen river and make the best of our way to Hackfall. Wild seemed inclined to stick to the longsettle in the kitchen, but I, on the other hand, stuck to my guns, so we proceeded on our way. Above Mickley Weir is a long distance of deep water, which was covered with thick black ice which would have gladdened the heart of anyone devoted to the art of skating. Not being provided with skates, G. and I instituted a series of slides, and so proceeded up the river for a couple of miles without once touching the bank. Wild was timid ; he told us harrowing tales of persons who had come to an un-

timely end by similar conduct, and narrated marvellous adventures which had befallen himself ; but G. and I attributed these to the influence of Mackley's ale, and proceeded on our feats of daring. The rough stones at Mickley Barrows, however, compelled us to leave the ice, and after taking Wild and myself posed pic-



THE UPPER FALLS, AYSGARTH ON THE YORE.

turesquely on a miniature iceberg, we wended our way through some two feet of snow until a lovely view of "Fisherman's Hut" and "Mowbray Point" caused us to halt, and another plate was covered.

So severe has the past winter been that Mr. Arton, the landowner on the north side of the river, has been

obliged to feed the rabbits with hay and turnips. The squirrels also have gained by this arrangement ; and some idea of Mr. Arton's love of wild animals may be gained by the fact, that he will not allow a single squirrel, stoat, weasel, badger, or kingfisher to be destroyed on his lands. We reached the Sand Bed stream about three o'clock, and it became evident that if any more views were to be taken no time would have to be lost, therefore a couple more plates were exposed, and then a retrograde movement was called. At Mickley Barrows we again took to the ice, and crossed over at the weir to Mickley ; just one last farewell to the Mackley family, and then homewards to Tanfield. As we mounted the rising ground looking down upon Staveley's stream, we witnessed a sight that, if depicted on canvas, would be pronounced impossible. In the west the sun was setting in a sky of the brightest saffron. Above our heads was a canopy of deep Italian blue, and the eastern horizon was suffused with brilliant rose colour. This was reflected on the snow-covered banks, the leafless trees, and the old Marmion tower which stood out boldly against the twilight sky in the distance. The saffron tint of the west caused the river to appear as though of molten brass flowing through pink banks. I have never seen such a sunset before, and perhaps never will again. The lovely vision faded as suddenly as it appeared, and shortly afterwards we walked into the familiar little bar at the Bruce Arms. An excellent

dinner, in which chickens and home-fed spareribs played a by no means unimportant part, a postprandial pipe, and just one "Scotch" to keep out the cold, and we make our way to the station. The stars twinkled brightly in the frosty sky, a contrast, indeed, to the bright sunshine of the day; and so in February, usually most cheerless of months, we experienced, as G. and I mutually agreed, a most charming winter's day.

A FORTNIGHT'S HOLIDAY.

THE SECOND WEEK.

UPON our return to Leeds on the Saturday night, we found that a friend of mine, Captain E. Warner from the Midlands, had arrived, and intended to accompany us to the Yore, and it is unnecessary for me to say that we had to relate to him all the proceedings of the past week, and give graphic descriptions of our sport. That department I assigned to "Redspinner," and right well he performed the task. After that friend W. gave us the details of a great day's sport on the Costa. It appears that he and a reverend friend were staying in the district and obtained a ticket each for a day's fishing. The Green Drake was just beginning to show, but only a few stragglers, and the fish would not look at the artificial. W. mounted, as an experiment, a couple of small flies, one of which was a Blue Upright, and immediately began to catch both trout and grayling, eventually filling his pannier and a couple of his pockets as well. This led to the narration of other record day's sport in various parts of the country, the time passing so

quickly that Monday morning arrived before we were hardly aware of the fact. Now, up to then, the weather had been perfect, but on looking at the glass in the hall before retiring on Sunday night, we saw a change was indicated. During the night I was awakened by the pattering of rain against the window panes, and when I drew up the blind on Monday morning, it was to gaze upon a prospect blurred and blotted, with the rain descending in torrents. However, that was not going to deter us, and assuming the most cheerful aspect we could under the circumstances, we left Leeds at 9-5 a.m., *en route* for Leyburn. The weather brightened up a little after we left Bedale, and by the time that we reached our destination it was almost fine, for which small mercy we were devoutly thankful, as we had a two miles' drive thence to Middleham, noted for its training stables, and also for its castle. On our way from Leyburn to Middleham we crossed the Yore, and saw at once that it was rising fast from the effects of the heavy rains overnight; this caused me some little uneasiness, as I never like an unsettled state of the water for grayling fishing. After planting our impedimenta at the White Swan, and arranged for beds, etc., I sallied forth to interview my friend J. E. M., who has been the local correspondent to the *Field* for over twenty years, and to ask his opinion as to the best course to pursue that afternoon. I found him at home, and in his hearty way he insisted upon me

returning for my companions and bringing them in for a bit of lunch. We also had a look round his gardens, which even at that late season were bright with flowers, and then I ventured to hint to my friends that our ostensible object in coming to Middleham was to fish, and that nothing had yet been decided as to that afternoon's work. It had now commenced once more to rain, and appeared likely to continue ; "Redspinner" therefore avowed his intention of taking an umbrella in place of his fishing rod, and watching the performance of myself and W.

J. E. M. said that the Yore would not do, but he thought one of the tributaries might ; so after donning our waterproofs, we set off across the fields under his guidance. "Just right height and colour," exclaimed our guide, as we descended a somewhat steep hill and came to a narrow wooded stream which was running what I always term "a pale ale water."

"Why, the grayling are actually rising," exclaimed "Redspinner," as a nice fish came up at the edge of a pool below where we were standing ; "just like my luck to leave my rod behind," he continued. I decided, upon this, to commence with the fly, and W. said that he would try the maggot in the eddies. I accordingly mounted a cast of three flies, viz., Reg Tag for point fly, Blue Hawk first dropper, and Brown Ant at the top. My very first cast over the rising fish settled his fate, and three or four minutes later he was reposing in my creel, a nice grayling about

three-quarters pound. Another soon followed, and then it became apparent that we were going to have some fun. A row of stepping-stones crossed the river just above where I was fishing, and by the advice of J. E. M., I crossed the stream and commenced fishing a long deep flat, overhung with trees, wading carefully along the edge and throwing underhand under the opposite bank. Not knowing the kind of place I was going to fish, I had brought my 12 ft. fly rod, which was rather too long for this kind of work. I rose a great number of fish, but, owing to the branches overhead, I could not strike them properly. I killed four more grayling and a trout before I came to another open space, and there I found W. swimming the maggot, and a couple of nice $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. grayling laid on the bank beside him. J. E. M. now appeared at the other side of the stream, in a little thicket of nut bushes, and shouted to me to make my way through the wood until I came to a pool at the head of a stream, in the centre of which was an island. He added that it was round the next corner about a quarter of a mile higher up. I have done some pretty rough bits of wading in my life, but I do not remember anything much worse than the length that intervened between me and the afore-said pool; now in the water, tumbling all round slippery boulders which afforded anything but secure foothold, now struggling along the bank through a perfect network of branches; but there was this comfort, I met with my reward when I did get there. The pool at last,

and, before commencing work on it, I laid down my rod and net on the gravel bed, lit my pipe, and repaired a damage to my cast of flies which had occurred through getting hung up in the wood. I then looked round me to take stock of the situation. It was indeed a lovely spot ; the pool itself was about fifty yards in length, and at the head of it a strong rushing stream, with a vista of overhanging greenery beyond ; below was a splendid rapid trout stream, with the island in the centre of it ; on the opposite side of the river a row of willows fringed the edge, through a gap in which I could see an expanse of open ground covered with nut bushes and bracken ; at my own side was a gravel bed, on which I was standing, and a mass of towering foliage came right down to the margin of it. Suddenly I heard a shout, and, looking up stream, I could see that "Redspinner" was using W.'s rod, and was evidently contending with a heavy fish. At the conclusion of the encounter, he said it was a grayling over a pound, and that he was just "swimming the worm" for a short time ; he added that as he and W. passed the pool I was about to fish the grayling were rising well.

Upon turning my attention to my own fishing again, I found such to be the case, and for the last hour of that wet September afternoon I was kept busy ; almost every cast that I made towards the deeper water under the willows I either hooked or rose a fish, and some of them really good ones. The last one I

hooked led to disaster. I had just hooked this fish as W. and "Redspinner" came up behind the willows to watch me, and I found at once that he was a good 'un. At first he dived in under the willow branches and sulked, shaking his head occasionally after the manner of his kind, then all at once he ran downstream, taking fully fifteen yards of line right off the reel, and, luckily for me, just stopping before he reached the rough water ; then he turned back again, and turned gyratory somersaults all over the pool. All at once I saw that he evidently intended to make another rush downstream, and shouted to W., who had his waders on, to come in and net him as he passed. This he did, but just at the critical time his foot slipped on a round stone, and the next moment he was laid full length in the river. He soon was up, however, and was just in time to net the fish, which proved to be a fine grayling 1 lb. 3 oz.

It was now almost dark, and, as the road home was a rough one, we thought it best to retrace our steps ; besides, both of my companions were fairly well soaked, one by his immersion in the river, the other by the long wet grass and brushwood that he had passed through. Before we started, I turned out the contents of my basket, and found that between two and four-thirty I had killed twelve grayling and a brace of trout, besides losing at least another dozen after hooking them. My friends had taken half a dozen, all good ones, with maggot and worm. We

were none of us sorry when we saw the lights of Middleham twinkling below us, and, entering the market place by a lane leading past the castle, we were soon ensconced before a good fire, and forgot our troubles, while doing justice to a substantial dinner, which was awaiting us.

The following morning was more promising as regards the weather overhead, but the puddles in the roadway and the draggled condition of the hedgerows bore unmistakable evidence of a heavy downpour during the night ; one thing was quite certain, viz., that the Yore would still be unfishable, and therefore during breakfast time we held solemn conclave, and ultimately decided to try the tributary again. As we were sat, in came J. E. M. with the news that the Yore was higher than ever, so that settled the question at once. We therefore divided the water into beats ; W. to take the upper portion, "Redspinner" the middle, and myself from the junction with the main-stream upwards. Wishing my companions "good luck," I made my way down the lane to the starting place. There was not very much difference in the height or colour of the water than when we left off on the previous evening ; if anything it was a shade clearer, and, as the wind was blowing gently from the south-west, my hopes rose high. How often in an angler's experience do these hopes prove fallacious ! You think, as you thread the line through the rings, that very soon the limber top will be bending in a

delightful curve, and the winch making merry music ; then, after half an hour's patient work, you discover that the fish are not on the feed, but for what reason ? Ah ! my friend, that is the rub ; that is a mystery that no angler, however experienced he may be, can ever solve, for perhaps on some other occasion, when apparently everything is against you, the fish begin to take from the onset, and continue to the very end of the day.

The present occasion was an excellent illustration of this uncertainty. The first cast that I made was at the head of a pool overhung with trees. On my side of the river was a gravel bed ; on the other, a grey limestone rock rising sheer above the stream ; from its weather-beaten sides grew the bright green fronds of feathery ferns, some of which, drooping gracefully downwards, kissed the surface of the stream, as it formed near the base of one of those gently-flowing currents that the grayling loves so well. Towards this point I cast my line, and, just as it curved round into the straight, I saw a silvery gleam just below the surface. There was no break, however, and on raising the point of my rod, instead of the steady pull of a good grayling, as I expected, there was a blank. "Curious," I thought ; "must have struck too quickly," and once more my flies covered the spot. Again exactly the same result. What was the reason ? I still am wondering. But without any exaggeration, for fully an hour, I rose fish at every

cast, and failed to hook one of them, although they came apparently within an inch of the fly. Not one of them ever broke the surface of the water, and had I not good eyesight and seen each fish distinctly I might easily have been pardoned for making that most common of all excuses among unsuccessful anglers, viz., that there was not a fish in the river. At last came the welcome pull, and, from the manner in which he ran off the line and bored at the bottom, I felt quite certain that he was a good fish. What was my disgust, therefore, after some really exciting play, to find that my capture was only a $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. grayling, *hooked by the tail*. Evidently he had disdained the fly in the same manner as his comrades, but, emphasising his contempt of my feathered lure in a bolder way by a lash of his tail, he paid the penalty for his temerity. This completely settled me, and I came to the conclusion that I must have forgotten how to fish.

Then appeared visions of my companions successfully landing grayling after grayling. If they had been rising as freely above, and they hooking them, why their panniers must be full. Then I looked again at the unfortunate victim of juvenile precocity lying at the bottom of my creel. No, I could stand the suspense no longer. I *must* go up and see what they were doing.

The first part of my journey up stream was plain enough sailing, being fairly open ground, bestrewn with yellow bracken and fading herbage, but at length I came to an iron wire fencing, skirting an impene-

trable-looking coppice of larch, fir, hazel, and bramble. So far as I could see, there was no clearly defined path through this obstruction, but, as it separated me from my fellow anglers, I determined to do my best to thread my way through the maze. This was, however, easier said than done ; and when, by dint of holding my rod high above my head in some places, and in others threading it under the branches, I struggled for five minutes onwards, I suddenly found myself on the summit of a rocky precipice, hemmed in with bush and bramble on every side, while far down below me the swollen river rushed over its rocky bed. To add to my difficulties, my foothold was anything but secure, and it made me shudder to contemplate the result if the little plateau of shaky red sandstone upon which I was standing was to give way. The situation was undoubtedly an awkward one ; the question was, how to get out of it ? To retreat was impossible, to advance was equally so ; there was, therefore, only one course left, viz., to take my rod to pieces as well as I could, to unscrew my five-foot landing handle in half, and then climb upwards and explore the territory in that direction. This I did ; and, after much labour, and numerous scratches from erratic brambles, I found myself, to my great delight, in an open path winding down through the wood. It appears that there was a gate, on the outskirts of the wood, leading to this path, the existence of which I was unaware of.

Just beyond this point I came upon "Redspinner," and then I found that he had experienced just the same results as I had. As we sat together on a low stone wall, eating our lunch, J.E.M. appeared, and advised us to proceed higher up, but my friend deciding to stick to his present ground, my guide conducted me to a broad and comparatively slow-running pool, about one hundred yards in length, with a rushing stream at the head of it. And then came the reward of perseverance, for now the fish appeared to have awakened from their inaction, and I basketed both trout and grayling in rapid succession ; from two o'clock until four the fun continued, so that when the three of us met together, as arranged at that time, we all had the same tale to tell, and the same good baskets to exhibit to each other. It appeared that the rise came on at exactly the same time in each case, and yet not one of us could assign any reason for the sudden change.

Next morning J. E. M. brought us the welcome news that the Yore was falling rapidly, and, if no more rain fell, he thought that it would be fishable on the morrow ; therefore we decided to again stick to the tributary ; but, instead of commencing at the same point as I did on the previous day, I made direct to the pool where I had experienced my good sport. I commenced with the fly, but, not rising anything, I changed to the worm, and found that equally a failure. A single maggot, fished on a very small hook, was my

next experiment, and with that I "struck ile," or rather a grayling, for I had hold of one the second swim at the tail of the rapid stream at the head of the pool. In less than a couple of hours I had killed eleven—all nice fish, from $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to 1 lb. ; and then there was an end of that, for they ceased taking as suddenly as they had commenced on the previous day. Then I saw a rise or two under the willows on the far bank, and, changing to fly, I very soon piloted one of the gentlemen across to my side.

The remainder of the short autumn day was spent in this manner, and, before wading across to rejoin my companions, I counted the spoil, which consisted of eighteen grayling and four trout. The best fish were those which had fallen victims to the maggot ; but I had no small ones among the lot. W. and J. E. M. arrived just as I was reeling up, and the latter said that he would conduct us to "Redspinner" (who was below) through a short cut in the wood. I was somewhat reluctant myself, preferring the open after my experience of the previous day ; but there was no denying our friend ; so, gathering up our gear and girding up our loins, we submissively followed him. I shall not forget that short cut for some time. Herrick's line—"Rockie are thy wayes all over"—did not half describe the discomforts of that journey. Our guide bounded over the boulders with the agility of a young antelope, and I believe smiled with covert glee when he heard me give vent to a more than

usually expressive adjective, or beheld W. disappear momentarily from sight into some hidden pitfall. Great was our relief when the end was reached, and we emerged on to the gravel bed where I had "slated" the grayling on the Monday afternoon. "Redspinner" had just landed a good fish with a floating Red Quill Gnat as we came up to him, and, after watching him capture another brace in the same manner, the game was up for that day, and we made the best of our way homewards.

The next morning J. E. M. announced that at last the Yore was in order; so "Redspinner" and I, having a permit for the preserved water above Wensley Bridge, drove thither after breakfast, W. proceeding to fish the water which he had visited on the previous day. Wensley is in my eyes a model village, and its beauty indisputable. The vicarage is a typical residence for a country rector—white walls, covered with creeping plants, a trim, well-kept lawn; the whole surrounded with leafy verdure, through which, as we drive past, appears a distant view of a real old-fashioned kitchen garden, with the plums ripening on the ruddy brick walls, while a row of rustic beehives completed the picture. Then comes the church, hoary with age; and, wheeling round the corner, after a glimpse of Wensley Hall and a row of truly Arcadian dwellings (radiant with glowing Virginian creeper mingled with purple clematis), we descend the hill and pull up at the bridge foot.

The early morning had given promise of a fine day ; but even as the boy lifts our creels and rods from the dog-cart there is a spit or two of rain, and the driver, glancing westwards towards a gathering bank of black clouds, opines the day will turn out a wet one. On reaching the riverside, we found the water just right, both as regards colour and height. Our rods were soon in readiness, and we commenced operations on a charming grayling flat. My cast consisted of a Bradshaw's Fancy as tail fly, with a Waterhen Bloa and Dark Needle as droppers ; my companion pinned his faith on a Red Tag for tail, surmounted by a Dark Snipe and Purple, and Poult Bloa with a rusty body. For fully half an hour did we stick assiduously to that piece of water (which looked perfect for grayling), but not a rise could be obtained, except from a number of unusually large salmon smolt, some of them certainly four or five ounces in weight.

"This won't do, old man !" at length ejaculated my friend. "Let us get higher up stream," he added.

Accordingly on we went—over a lot of rough, stony ground, covered with briar, bramble, and fern—until we arrived at a lovely stream, situated just above a one-arched stone bridge, which crosses the river for the convenience of the residents of Bolton Hall. I had broken the ice by killing a nice grayling out of an eddy below this bridge, and almost the first throw in the stream above named "Redspinner" hooked a pounder, which escaped when almost close to the

landing net. A few more casts and his rod was bending again, this time the victim being basketed. So we went on for about an hour—now losing, now catching either a trout or a grayling; and then the sport ended as suddenly as it had begun.

I should here remark that a smart breeze had sprung up shortly after we had commenced, and this had driven the rain clouds away. Some large grayling were rising under a row of trees at the opposite side of the river. My companion, noticing this, waded across (not a very easy task), and began to wage war against them with a single dry fly, while I proceeded up stream to prospect the water. I soon came upon a grand pool, into which a gravelly stream ran, and I determined (having apparently exhausted the resources of fly) to give the worm a chance.

Wading cautiously into the shallow water at the edge of the stream, I despatched the little round float on its errand, and had the satisfaction of seeing it slant sideways just at the place where I had expected. The next moment a silvery three-quarter pound grayling was careering down stream, running out line rapidly. He came to the net all right; but his mate, which I hooked within the next few minutes, gained his liberty by twisting round and round like a teetotum.

But it was rather too early for this style of fishing (there having been an almost total absence of frost), and, after trying for another half hour without success, I again resorted to fly, with which I landed two more

grayling and a trout. This concluded the day's sport ; and, as it wanted but an hour to the time when we had ordered the trap to meet us at the bridge, I set off to find "Redspinner," and see how he had fared. He had seduced two or three of the old stagers under the trees where I had left him, and our baskets were very similar when counted over.

It was a beautiful sunset that greeted our eyes on our return journey : there were imaginary castles and towers, rocky crags and sloping mountains, depicted in sombre purple against a background of crimson ; there were also lakes and rivers marked out in pale opal green ; and a hazy golden mist shining over all. We watched them fade slowly from our view, not one trace being left behind us as we alighted at our inn and found that W. had not yet arrived. He came in very soon afterwards, jubilant and radiant of countenance. He had made a friendly bet of a bottle of wine with me on the previous evening that he caught more fish than I ; and concerning the result of this wager "Redspinner" had chuckled consumedly the whole of the day.

"Now then, how many have you got?" were his first words as he burst in upon us, as we were engaged in removing our waders in the bar. I told him.

"Then I have won!" he excitedly exclaimed, stating a number one fish in excess of my catch. And so it proved ; for although bad luck had pursued him all day, towards the close of the afternoon he

came to a likely-looking stream, out of which he landed a goodly number of nice-sized grayling.

And now we had come to our last day at Middleham. Our hearts were heavy, as our visit had been a most pleasant one, thanks to the warm-hearted hospitality of friend J. E. M., and the excellent catering for our comfort by mine host at the White Swan. We decided to spend it upon the same water as on the previous day ; while W., who was anxious to have one day on the Yore, dismounted with us at the lodge gates, and walked through the park a couple of miles up stream to another length of good water for which we had a permit. The water was in capital order—both lower and clearer than on the previous day—so that we commenced work in good spirits. Leaving R. at the stream above the private bridge, I walked up to the one where I had reeled up on the previous evening, and at the very first cast hooked and landed a $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. grayling. This was certainly encouraging, and, thinking it time to give this stream a rest, I made my way onwards. I soon came to a large open space, where a wooden hut with a table in front and a row of hutches proclaimed the existence of a pheasantry. Beyond, a thick wood descended right to the river's edge ; and, as the water under the overhanging branches was about eighteen inches in depth, I at once saw that I had come across a piece of fly water of superlative quality.

There was only about thirty yards of it, as beyond

this point the water was considerably deeper, so I determined to make the most of my opportunities. Quietly descending the bank at the fence which divided the wood at the pheasant ground, I waded some three yards out into the stream, and made a carefully measured cast under the branches into the amber-coloured water. I saw something move like a grey shadow, raised my wrist gently, and hauled a lovely grayling down stream behind me, where I played him out, and ultimately basketed him; then a trout followed, and finally, by very careful fishing, out of that short length of water, I, in less than half an hour, killed six grayling and four trout. Nothing could prove the value of up stream fishing more than this performance, as if I had allowed one of those fish to head into the water above me, the whole would have been utterly spoiled.

A short time before I landed the tenth fish I thought that the water did not appear quite so clear as when I waded in, and while retracing my steps towards the railings I experienced some difficulty in reaching that point. There was no doubt about it—the river was rising rapidly, and, knowing the extreme danger from this cause to anyone not well acquainted with the river Yore, I immediately ran as fast as possible to inform “Redspinner” of the fact; but he had already discovered it for himself, and, when I found him, was sitting on the bank, smoking placidly.

There was no more fly fishing for us that day, the

remainder of which we devoted to "swimming the worm," picking up a chance fish here and there ; W. joined us about three o'clock in the afternoon, but had done next to nothing ; having to walk such a long distance to his fishing ground, the water began to rise almost as soon as he got there.

That night the rain descended in torrents, continuing until ten o'clock next morning ; it then brightened up, and we set off to drive across country to Tanfield, where the genial proprietor of Tanfield Lodge (Mr. Thomas Arton) had given us an invitation to join him at luncheon, and afterwards have a cast or two on the portion of the Yore preserved by him. We arrived there in due course, and thoroughly enjoyed his hospitality, but any attempt at fishing was completely out of the question. Such a flood came down the Yore that September afternoon as I had not witnessed for many a long year, and the spectacle below the weir at Tanfield Mill was one not easily to be forgotten. The whole of the river below that point resembled a miniature Niagara more than anything else ; it absolutely made one shudder to think of the fate of any angler who might chance to be overtaken and swept away by that boiling torrent.

A pleasant chat with the rector of the village in his beautiful garden overlooking the river, a half hour's rest in the snug little bar at the Bruce Arms, and then we are once more on our homeward journey to smoky Leeds, all of us feeling the better for our well spent

holiday, and ready for the inevitable work at the mill, which tends in itself to render the enjoyment of such relaxation so much more appreciable.

A WEEK IN WALES.

THERE are few things that are more pleasant, according to my way of thinking, than to plan an excursion to an unknown district, and for weeks beforehand to picture in your mind what the hotel, the river, and the scenery, will be like. As a general rule the sport does not come up to your expectations, while the other portion of the programme very often excels them. Such was my experience many years ago, when, in company with my wife, I paid my first visit to "gallant little Wales." For months beforehand I spent hours in poring over the pages of the "Angler's Diary," endeavouring to discover a likely place, and at length I singled out the following:—
"Llanbedr, near Barmouth ; railway station, Pensarn ; on the river Artio ; inn, the Victoria ; close to the sea and Harlech Castle. Sport in August very good, with both sewen and trout. Several good lakes in the district. Day tickets may be obtained at the hotel." This seemed attractive enough, and after several preliminary letters between the landlord and myself, it was decided that Llanbedr should be our abiding place for a week's holiday.

Leaving Leeds one August afternoon, we found ourselves at Shrewsbury about seven o'clock in the evening. We were informed that there were no more trains on the Cambrian branch until morning, so securing a room at one of the principal hotels, we had a long walk on the banks of the Severn before turning in for the night. Shrewsbury as a town is all right, being both clean and picturesque, but the hotel in question will ever dwell in my memory. In the first place, the sitting-room, in which we found supper laid after our return, smelt like a family vault, and the two wax candles, which served to only make darkness visible, did certainly not prove conducive to cheerfulness. A cold fowl, decked out with a profusion of parsley, turned out to be utterly impregnable to any attempts to carve it, and at length I gave it up as a bad job, and twisted the legs off with my hands. When we retired to rest, the presence of certain members of the insect tribe effectually barred all attempts at sleep, so that altogether we were not sorry when we shook the dust of Shrewsbury from off our feet, and commenced our journey on that curious little narrow gauge railway, known as the Cambrian line. I had often heard tell of the delights of railway travelling in the Principality; how the sight of an elderly female frantically waving a gingham umbrella half a mile distant was considered by the engine driver quite sufficient reason for bringing the train to a standstill. How the guard, upon seeing a meadow white with

mushrooms, would call a halt, and gather a supply, and many other startling narratives of a similar nature. I had always looked upon these statements as mere jest, but after the journey from the town of cakes to Barmouth I felt inclined to believe anything. At every little station, and there were not a few, the guard, station master, and porters held animated conversations without the slightest regard to time tables, and when at last I heard the cry, "Pensarn, Pensarn; change here for Llanbedr," I gave a sigh of relief; and tumbling out my belongings upon the tiny platform, the train rumbled off across the marshy moorland, and I looked around for the conveyance which was to take us on to our destination. It was in readiness outside the gate, and in a few moments we were bowling rapidly along a typical country lane.

There is no denying the picturesqueness of Welsh scenery. The lustrous gloom of the August evening was fast closing in, and in the distance the purple hills stood out, sharply outlined against the western sky; a sudden turn in the road, and we saw the lights of the Victoria gleaming in the distance; a few moments more and the landlord gave us a cordial welcome. There was just light enough to see the grey old stone bridge crossing the Artio, which flowed close under the garden at the side of the house, and then we were ushered into a snug little sitting-room with bright fire burning in the grate, a table ready laid for a comfortable meal, and an appetising odour

arising from the kitchen below. Some excellent soup, a couple of sea trout, or sewen, as they are called in that district, a leg of Welsh mutton done to a turn, and an apple tart, quickly dissipated any feelings of ill-temper engendered by the discomforts of the journey, and after a cigar had consummated digestion, I felt on terms of peace with all mankind.

I was up betimes in the morning, and was enjoying a pipe on the bridge, when I was joined by an old fellow who turned out to be the authority of the district on matters piscatorial. We were very soon the best of friends, and from a weatherbeaten-looking pocket book he soon produced some trout and sewen flies, which were the killers for the time being. There had not been much sport lately, he told me; the water was too low, but in the evenings he had killed some good fish with the white moth, and so on, and so on. I cannot give a detailed description of my daily sport during the pleasant week spent at Llanbedr, but I will give one or two incidents connected with the same. In the first place, every day at eleven o'clock it invariably rained; it made no difference what the early morning was like; as soon as ever the time named arrived, the heavens opened, and for the space of an hour it rained, not in a half-hearted way either, but real good honest rain. We became used to it at last, and quite looked forward to it.

Francis Francis, in one of his inimitable angling articles, tells an amusing tale, how he and a friend

were sitting in a country inn one evening, when a bombastic individual, in a very loud voice, asserted that on a Welsh stream he once killed twenty trout that averaged 1 lb. apiece. Francis's friend gently premised that he did not believe it. Thereupon there were symptoms of a row. "Now, look here, my friend," said Francis, "will you indicate the length of the fish; don't do it in an anything-from-a-foot-to-a-yard kind of way in the air, but mark it out on the table." "Now," he continued, indicating about 14 inches, "were they that length?" He of the big take admitted that they were hardly so long as that. The length was gradually shortened down to 10 inches. "Yes," said Francis, coolly, "exactly what I thought, and very good fish for Wales, if they measured that." Such was my experience, but they were game little fellows, and that in some degree compensated for their small size.

One day I was fishing in a meadow, perhaps a mile above the inn, and my better half was gathering brambles, which were very plentiful, even so early. I heard a sound behind me, and upon turning round, I saw an unkempt-looking individual gesticulating wildly, but as he could speak nothing but unadulterated Welsh, I was as wise as if he was talking Sanscrit. As he seemed to be somewhat perturbed in his mind, I laid down my rod and net and tried to argue with him; but as he showed unmistakable signs of a violent desire to throw me into the river, I thought it advis-

able to make tracks. So we did, as wise as ever at the finish.

We had heard so much of the fishing to be had in a lake among the hills, called Llyn Cwm Brachen, that we determined to make a pilgrimage thither, so armed with a guide-book, set off one morning. Every now and then we referred to the book. It told us to cross a wooden bridge—we found at least a dozen; it told us to go through a fir plantation, we found an equal number of them; then I espied a Welsh maiden of perhaps twenty summers, and tried to make her understand what we wanted, but all of no avail. I think, had I been alone, I could have become very good friends with the girl, despite my utter inability to understand a word she said; but other considerations stood in the way, and I smiled graciously and followed my wife up the steep hillside with the resignation of a martyr. We found the lake at last, and just as we arrived a thunderstorm of extra superfine quality burst upon us, and the next hour was spent in a shepherd's hut, with the water coming in, at the thatched roof like a sieve. There was no fishing to be done, and the return journey was pleasantly diversified by having to carry my companion in misfortune over rivulets which did not exist on our upward journey.

I often think of that pleasant week's holiday, the daily wanderings on the banks of the little river, the walks on the sea-shore, and the excursions to the lakes in the heart of the Welsh hills. I often wonder if the

genial old landlord and his kind-hearted sister are still alive, and sometimes when I am studying where to go for a week's fishing, I feel inclined to once more undergo the misery of a railway journey on that Cambrian line in order to spend another happy week upon the banks of the Artio.

SEA-FISHING AT REDCAR.

HONESTLY speaking, I cannot say that up to now I have had any great desire to spend a holiday at the sea-side. On the one hand, I have always conjured up visions of paddling infants, spades and buckets, giggling nurse girls *et hoc genus* ; and on the other, young men and maidens of the masher persuasion, whose inane conversation and more idiotic behaviour were anything but suggestive of peace and quietness. But at length I am converted ; and now the mention of any of our watering-places reminds me of sheeny mackerel, quivering whiting, and the struggles and rushes of the mightier codling. Domestic circumstances demanded my presence at Redcar. I was very loth to go, for my soul hankered after Redmire, or Bainbridge, or Appletreewick, or Tanfield, or—in fact a score more country retreats which are to me like a second home. But we all know what it is when the presiding deity of the household says that a thing has to be done. So to Redcar I went. Of course, as soon as I got there my first inquiry was if there was a boatman who was well up in the geography of the fishing grounds. My eldest daughter soon satisfied

my mind on that score. She knew one who had taken her and her sisters almost daily on to the sea. He had taught her to row like a female Sadler, and shown her which were the best fishing grounds for codling, mackerel, or whiting. That was all that I wanted, and I immediately looked up and interviewed Harry Guy, Lord Street, Redcar, whom I forthwith proclaim to be the most civil, intelligent, and capable boatman that I have ever come across. While rowing with him on the Sunday evening he regaled me with a graphic account of his achievements on the previous night, when he landed a mixed haul of whiting, haddocks, and dog-fish, amounting in all to one hundred and twenty fish. The bait was herring and mussels, and he recounted how for one hour they were mad on the former, and how later on the mussel was prime favourite. Finally, I agreed with him to have his boat, bearing the romantic name of "Florrie," ready at eight o'clock on the Monday evening, with a plentiful supply of bait and everything necessary in the way of lines and tackle. The morning arrived, wet and stormy, and the prospect was anything but encouraging. The long, level sands, which have caused Redcar to become a perfect children's paradise, looked like a second desert of Sahara, and both the nursegirls and their little charges who had braved the inclement weather looked draggled and woe-begone in the extreme.

But presently, as the day wore on, old Sol won the ascendency, and towards the close of the afternoon

Redcar was bright with sunshine and the varied hues of ladies' holiday attire. It was a brave show. The ubiquitous trippers came in their hundreds from Stockton, Middlesbrough, and the surrounding districts ; the male sex gorgeous in white waistcoats, coats that emulated that of Joseph, and neckties of every conceivable hue ; ladies clad in fairy-like costumes that I am unable to properly describe, and, as my knowledge of art fabrics is limited, I do not intend to attempt to do ; stout mothers struggling under the management of a troupe of children riotous in their enjoyment, and sticky from head to foot owing to the consumption of a mysterious sweetmeat rejoicing in the title of "Redcar Rock" ; fathers who endeavoured to appear quite unattached to the family party, and making every conceivable attempt to escape on little expeditions of their own ; children on donkeys, children on tricycles, children everywhere—such were a few of the sights I witnessed as I sat on the sands smoking the pipe of peace and wishing for the advent of evening. Everything comes to him who waits, and at last came the hour of eight. At the last moment several of the ladies decided to accompany us, and the little maiden, who has figured before in these pages, was so loud in her lamentations that she was allowed to embark. Harry said that, as there was a good breeze, he would erect his sail, and not trouble to row to the fishing ground ; therefore he did so, and we were soon on our way, leaving the lights of the town twinkling

in the distance. It was a lovely evening. The sun was just disappearing in the west, red as a ball of fire, leaving a fiery track on the broad surface of the opalescent sea. From the pier was wafted the sweet strains of a string band, but beyond that not a sound could be heard except the washing of the waves against the boat and the hum of voices on the shore. Gradually these fade away in the distance, and the voice of the ocean alone remains. At last Harry announced that we had reached our destination, and the anchor was thrown overboard and duly fixed.

Then the hand-lines were given out, and our boatman took charge of the bait department. Hardly had my lead fairly settled down when I felt the tug—tug that a practised fisherman can at once detect, and in another moment a silvery whiting was glancing upwards in the clear, green water. One of the ladies next scored with a brace at one haul, and then I excelled that feat with three at once. I should here explain that the tackle was of the usual primitive kind in vogue among professional boatmen—namely, a line wound into a square wooden frame, with three hooks tied on whipcord, and attached to the line at intervals. Mussels were the only bait we used. For a couple of hours did we continue to haul them on board, curiously enough, nothing but silvery whiting, until at last, exactly at ten o'clock, the bait gave out, and the fun was at an end. How my soul yearned for another few hours of the sport ; how I wished that Harry and

I could have fished on until daybreak, with a snooze in the bottom of the boat, as a kind of interval, did we feel tired, which was hardly likely, and I feel certain that we should have taken six or seven stones of fish. As it was, our take numbered fifty-eight—not a bad result for a couple of hours' fishing. Once more the sail was unfurled, the anchor drawn, and the keel of the boat turned towards the shore. It was now dark, save for the light of the stars, which twinkled in the broad blue vault above.

As the blue smoke ascended in the fresh night air from my pipe, I felt supremely happy and comfortable. "I wish you lived here, sir," remarked Harry, as we landed once more on *terra firma*. "What times we would have in 'Walter' and 'Florrie'! We would go all round for twenty miles, and fish for everything that could be caught." How thoroughly I agreed with his sentiments I need not say, but if I did go in for that kind of sport, I should fish with a rod and very different tackle. Before I left Redcar I completely converted Harry on this important point. Sea fish can smell danger, and discover coarse tackle, quite as readily as fresh-water fish. Besides, look at the difference in the sport of landing them on fine tackle, and the coarse string which is almost always employed. I agreed to send him a complete outfit if he would give it a trial, and he promised to do so. He also told me that off the "rocks," which lie about a mile from the shore (we fished about two miles out), excellent

codling fishing is to be had, and in their season mackerel and billet are plentiful. The mackerel take either fly or a triangular spinner readily, and the billet fancy a fly composed of a red body, ribbed with broad gold tinsel, and a white swan's wing, dressed full. Nothing answers better for the body of this fly than a piece of turkey-red flannel. This can be surreptitiously obtained from your wife's flannel petticoat, while she is slumbering peacefully. If the theft is discovered before you can escape in the morning, endeavour to persuade her that it is due to mice or moths, or anything else that may occur to you. I don't guarantee an acceptance of your statement, so please don't blame me if you get into trouble through my suggestion. I was really sorry to leave Redcar, and when Harry, with his horny hand in mine, whispered, "You'll come again, sir, won't you?" I replied in the words of the playwright, "Why, cert'nly."

THE END.

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Walbran

Grayling and how to catch
them

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